











ILLUSTRATIONS

OF

*M. Pickering*

LYING,

IN

ALL ITS BRANCHES.

BY AMELIA OPIE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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# ILLUSTRATIONS OF LYING,

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ALL ITS BRANCHES.

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MISTAKEN KINDNESS.

ANN BELSON had lived in a respectable merchant's family, of the name of Melbourne, for many years, and had acquitted herself to the satisfaction of her employers in the successive capacities of nurse, house-maid, and lady's-maid. But it was at length discovered that she had long been addicted to petty pilfering ; and, being emboldened by past impunity, she purloined some valuable lace, and was detected : but as her kind master and

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mistress could not prevail on themselves to give up the tender nurse of their children to the just rigour of the law, and as their children themselves could not bear to have “poor Ann sent to gaol,” they resolved to punish her in no other manner, than by turning her away *without a character*, as the common phrase is. But without a character she could not procure another service, and might be thus consigned to misery and ruin. This idea was insupportable! However she might deserve punishment they shrunk from inflicting it; and they resolved to keep Ann Belson themselves, as they could not recommend her conscientiously to any one else. This was a truly benevolent action; because, if she continued to sin, they alone were exposed to suffer from her fault. But they virtuously resolved to put no

further temptation in her way, and to guard her against herself, by unremitting vigilance.

During the four succeeding years, Ann Belson's honesty was so entirely without a stain, that her benevolent friends were convinced that her penitence was sincere, and congratulated themselves that they had treated her with such lenity.

At this period the pressure of the times, and losses in trade, produced a change in the circumstances of the Melbournes; and retrenchment became necessary. They, therefore, felt it right to discharge some of their servants, and particularly the lady's maid.

The grateful Ann would not hear of this dismissal. She insisted on remaining on any terms, and in any situation; nay, she declared her willing-

ness to live with her indulgent friends for nothing ; but, as they were too generous to accept her services at so great a disadvantage to herself, especially as she had poor relations to maintain, they resolved to procure her a situation ; and having heard of a very advantageous one, for which she was admirably calculated, they insisted on her trying to procure it.

“ But what shall we do, my dear,” said the wife to the husband, “ concerning Ann’s character ? Must we tell the whole truth ? As she has been uniformly honest during the last four years, should we not be justified in concealing her fault ? ” — “ Yes ; I think at least, I hope so,” replied he. “ Still as she was dishonest more years than she has now been honest, I really . . . I . . . it is a very puzzling question Charlotte ; and I am but a weak ca

suist." A strong christian might not have felt the point so difficult. But the Melbournes had not studied serious things deeply; and the result of the consultation was, that Ann Belson's past faults should be concealed, if possible.

And possible it was. Lady Baryton, the young and noble bride who wished to hire her, was a thoughtless, careless woman of fashion; and as she learned that Ann could make dresses, and dress hair to admiration, she made few other inquiries; and Ann was installed in her new place.

It was, alas! the most improper of places, even for a sincere penitent, like Ann; for it was a place of the most dangerous trust. Jewels, laces, ornaments of all kinds, were not only continually exposed to the eyes of Ann Belson, but placed under her es-

pecial care. Nor those alone. When her lady returned home from a run of good luck at loo, a reticule, containing bank notes and sovereigns, was emptied into an unlocked drawer; and Ann was told how fortunate her lady had been. The first time that this heedless woman acted thus, the poor Ann begged she would lock up her money. "Not I; it is too much trouble; and why should I?"—"Because, my lady, it is not right to leave money about; it may be stolen."—"Nonsense! who should steal it? I know you must be honest; the Melbournes gave you such a high character." Here Ann turned away in agony and confusion. "But, my lady, the other servants," she resumed in a faint voice. "Pray, what business have the other servants at my drawers?"—"However, do you lock up the drawer, and keep the



key.”—“No; keep it *yourself*, my lady.”—“What! I go about with keys, like a housekeeper? Take it, I say!” Then flinging the key down, she went singing out of the room, little thinking to what peril, temporal and spiritual, she was exposing a hapless fellow-creature.

For some minutes after this *new danger* had opened upon her, Ann sat leaning on her hands, absorbed in painful meditation, and communing seriously with her own heart; nay, she even prayed for a few moments to be delivered from evil; but the next minute she was ashamed of her own self-distrust, and tried to resume her business with her usual alacrity.

A few evenings afterwards, her lady brought her reticule home, and gave it to Ann, filled as before. “I conclude, my lady, you know how much

money is in this purse.”—“I did know; but I have forgotten.”—“Then let me tell it.”—“No, no; nonsense!” she replied as she left the room; “lock it up, and then it will be safe, you know, as I can trust you.” Ann sighed deeply, but repeated within herself, “Yes, yes; I am certainly now to be trusted!” but, as she said this, she saw two sovereigns on the carpet, which she had dropped out of the reticule in emptying it, and had locked the drawer without perceiving. Ann felt fluttered when she saw them; but, taking them up, resolutely felt for the key to add them to the others;—but the image of her recently widowed sister, and her large destitute family, rose before her, and she thought she would *not return* them, but ask her lady to give them to the poor widow. But then, her lady had already been very bountiful to her,

and she would not ask her ; however, she would consider the matter, and it seemed as if it was *intended* she should have the sovereigns ; for they were separated from the rest, *as if for her*. Alas ! it would have been safer for her to believe that they were left there as a *snare* to try her penitence, and her faith ; but she took a different view of it ; she picked up the gold, then laid it down ; and long and severe was the conflict in her heart between good and evil.

We weep over the woes of romance ; we shed well-motived tears over the sorrows of real life ; but, where is the fiction, however highly wrought, and where the sorrows, however acute, that can deserve our pity and our sympathy so strongly, as the *agony* and conflicts of a *penitent*, yet *tempted* soul ! Of a soul that has turned to

virtue, but is forcibly pulled back again to vice,—that knows its own danger, without power to hurry from it; till, fascinated by the glittering bait, as the bird by the rattlesnake, it yields to its fatal allurements, regardless of consequences! It was not without many a heartach, many a struggle, that Ann Belson gave way to the temptation, and put the gold in her pocket; and when she had done so, she was told her sister was ill, and had sent to beg she would come to her, late as it was. Accordingly, when her lady was in bed, she obtained leave to go to her, and while she relieved her sister's wants with the two purloined sovereigns, the poor thing almost fancied that she had done a good action! Oh! never is sin so dangerous as when it has allured us in the shape of a deed of benevolence.

It had so allured the Melbournes when they concealed Ann's faults from Lady Baryton; and its bitter fruits were only too fast preparing.

“*Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute;*” says the proverb, or “the first step is the only difficult one.” The next time her lady brought her winnings to her, Ann pursued a new plan: she insisted on telling the money over; but took care to make it less than it was, by two or three pounds. Not long after, she told Lady Baryton that she must have a new lock put on the drawer that held the money, as she had certainly dropped the key *somewhere*; and that, before she missed it, some one, she was sure, had been trying at the lock; for it was evidently hampered the last time she unlocked it. “Well, then, get a new lock,” replied her careless mistress; however, let the

drawer be forced now ; and then we had better tell over the money." The drawer was forced ; they told the money ; and even Lady Baryton was conscious that some of it was missing. But, the *missing key*, and *hampered lock*, exonerated Ann from suspicion ; especially as Ann owned that she had *discovered* the loss before ; and declared that, had not her lady insisted on telling over the money, she had intended to replace it gradually ; because she felt herself responsible : while Lady Baryton, satisfied and deceived, recommended her to be on the watch for the thief ; and soon forgot the whole circumstance.

Lady Baryton thought herself, and perhaps she was, a woman of feeling. She never read the Old-Bailey convictions without mourning over the prisoners condemned to death ; and

never read an account of an execution without shuddering. Still, from want of reflection, and a high-principled sense of what we owe to others, especially to those who are the members of our own household, she never for one moment troubled herself to remember that she was daily throwing temptations in the way of a servant to commit the very faults which led those convicts, whom she pitied, to the fate which she deplored. Alas ! what have those persons to answer for, in every situation of life, who consider their dependants and servants merely as such, without remembering that they are, like themselves, heirs of the invisible world to come ; and that, if they take no pains to enlighten their minds, in order to *save* their immortal souls, they should, at least, be careful never to *endanger* them.

In a few weeks after the dialogue given above, Lady Baryton bought some strings of pearls at an India sale; and having, on her way thence, shewn them to her jeweller, that he might count them, and see if there were enough to make a pair of bracelets, she brought them home, because she could not yet afford proper clasps to fasten them; and these were committed to Ann's care. But, as Lord Baryton, the next week, gave his lady a pair of diamond clasps, she sent the pearls to be made up immediately. In the evening, however, the jeweller came to tell her that there were two strings less than when she brought them before. "Then they must have been stolen! she exclaimed; and now I remember that Belson told me she was sure there was a thief in the house."—"Are you sure," said Lord



Baryton, “that Belson is not the thief herself?”—“Impossible! I had such a character of her! and I have trusted her implicitly!”—“It is not right to tempt even the most honest,” replied Lord Baryton; “but we must have strict search made; and all the servants must be examined.”

They were so; but, as Ann Belson was not a hardened offender, she soon betrayed herself by her evident misery and terror; and was committed to prison on her own *full confession*; but she could not help exclaiming, in the agony of her heart, “Oh, my lady! remember that I conjured you not to trust me!” and Lady Baryton’s heart reproached her, at least for *some hours*. There were other hearts also that experienced self-reproach, and of a far longer duration; for the Melbournes, when they heard what had happened,

saw that the seeming benevolence of their concealment had been a real injury, and had ruined her whom they meant to save. They saw that, had they told Lady Baryton the truth, that lady would either not have hired her, in spite of her skill, or she would have taken care not to put her in situations calculated to tempt her cupidity. But, neither Lady Baryton's regrets, nor self-reproach, nor the greater agonies of the *Melbournes*, could alter or avert the course of justice; and Ann Belson was condemned to death. She was, however, strongly recommended to mercy, both by the jury and the noble prosecutor; and her conduct in prison was so exemplary, so indicative of the deep contrition of a trembling, humble christian, that, at length, the intercession was not in vain; and the *Melbournes* had the comfort of carry-

ing to her what was to them, at least, joyful news; namely, that her sentence was commuted for transportation.

Yet, even this mercy was a severe trial to the self-judged Melbournes; since they had the misery of seeing the affectionate nurse of their children, the being endeared to them by many years of active services, torn from all the tender ties of existence, and exiled for life as a felon to a distant land! exiled too for a crime which, had they performed their SOCIAL DUTY, she might never have committed. But the pain of mind which they endured on this lamentable occasion was not thrown away on them; as it awakened them to serious reflection: they learned to remember, and to teach their children to remember, the holy command, “that we are not to do evil, that good may come;” and that no deviation

from truth and ingenuousness can be justified, even if it claims for itself the plausible title of the active or *passive* LIE OF BENEVOLENCE.

There is another species of withholding the truth, which springs from so amiable a source, and is so often practised even by pious christians, that, while I venture to say it is at variance with reliance on the wisdom and mercy of the Creator, I do so with reluctant awe. I mean a *concealment* of the whole extent of a calamity from the person afflicted, lest the blow should fall too heavily upon them.

I would ask, whether such conduct be not inconsistent with the belief that trials are *mercies* in disguise? that the Almighty “loveth those whom he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son that he receiveth?”

If this assurance be true, we set our own judgment against that of the Deity, by concealing from the sufferer the extent of the trial inflicted ; and seem to believe ourselves more capable than he is to determine the quantity of suffering that is good for the person so visited ; and we set up our *finite* against *infinite* wisdom.

There are other reasons, besides religious ones, why this sort of deceit should no more be practised than any other.

The motive for withholding the whole truth, on these occasions, is *to do good* : but will the desired good be effected by this opposition to the Creator's revealed will towards the sufferer ? Is it certain that good will be performed at all, or that concealment is necessary ?

What is the reason given for con-

cealing half the truth? Fear, lest the whole would be more than the sufferer could bear; which implies that it is already mighty, to an awful degree. Then, surely, a degree more of suffering, at such a moment, cannot possess much added power to destroy; and if the trial be allowed to come in its full force, the mind of the victim will make exactly the same efforts as minds always do when oppressed by misery. A state of heavy affliction is so repulsive to the feelings, that even in the first paroxysms of it we all make efforts to get away from under its weight; and, in proof of this assertion, I ask, whether we do not always find the afflicted less cast down than we expected? The religious pray as well as weep; the merely moral look around for consolation here, and, as a dog, when cast into the sea, as soon as

he rises and regains his breath, strikes out his feet, in order to float securely upon the waves ; so, be their sorrows great or small, all persons instantly strive to find support somewhere ; and they do find it, while in proportion to the depth of the affliction is often the subsequent rebound.

I could point out instances (but I shall leave my readers to imagine them) in which, by concealing from the bereaved sufferers the most affecting part of the truth, we stand between them and the balm derived from that very incident which was mercifully intended to heal their wounds.

I also object to such concealment ; because it entails upon those who are guilty of it a series of falsehoods ; falsehoods too, which are often fruitlessly uttered ; since the object of them is apt to suspect deceit, and endure that

restless agonizing suspicion, which those who have ever experienced it could never inflict on the objects of their love.

Besides, religion and reason enable us, in time, to bear the calamity of which we *know* the extent ; but we are always on the watch to find out that which we only *suspect*, and the mind's strength, frittered away in vain and varied conjectures, runs the risk of sinking beneath the force of its own indistinct fears.

Confidence too in those dear friends whom we trusted before is liable to be entirely destroyed ; and, in *all its bearings*, this well-intentioned departure from truth is pregnant with mischief.

*Lastly*, I object to such concealment, from a conviction that its continuance is IMPOSIBLE ; for, some time



or other, the whole truth is revealed at a moment when the sufferers are not so well able to bear it as they were in the first paroxysms of grief.

In this, my next and last tale, I give another illustration of those amiable, but pernicious lies, the LIES OF REAL BENEVOLENCE.

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#### THE FATHER AND SON.

“WELL, then, thou art willing that Edgar should go to a publick school,” said the vicar of a small parish in Westmoreland to his weeping wife. “Quite willing.”—“And yet thou art in tears, Susan?”—“I weep for his faults; and not because he is to quit us. I grieve to think he is so disobedient and unruly that we can manage

him at home no longer.”—“ And yet I loved him so dearly ! so much more than . . . .” Here her sobs redoubled ; and, as Vernon rested her aching head on his bosom, he said, in a low voice, “ Aye ; and so did I love him, even better than our other children ; and therefore, probably, our injustice is thus visited. But, he is so clever ! He learned more Latin in a week than his brothers in a month !”—“ And he is so *beautiful* !” observed his mother.” “ And so generous !” rejoined his father ; but, cheer up, my beloved ; under stricter discipline than ours he may yet do well, and turn out all we could wish.”—“ I hope, however,” replied the fond mother, “ that his master will not be very severe ; and I will try to look forward.” As she said this, she left her husband with something like comfort ; for a tender mother’s hopes

for a darling child are easily revived, and she went, with recovered calmness, to get her son's wardrobe ready against the day of his departure. The equally affectionate father meanwhile called his son into the study, to prepare his mind for that parting which his undutiful conduct had made unavoidable.

But Vernon found that Edgar's mind required no preparation ; that the idea of change was delightful to his volatile nature ; and that he panted to distinguish himself on a wider field of action than a small retired village afforded to his daring, restless spirit ; while his father saw with agony, which he could but ill conceal, that this desire of entering into a new situation had power to annihilate all regret at parting with the tenderest of parents and the companions of his childhood.

However, his feelings were a little soothed when the parting hour arrived ; for then the heart of Edgar was so melted within him at the sight of his mother's tears, and his father's agony, that he uttered words of tender contrition, such as they had never heard from him before ; the recollection of which spoke comfort to their minds when they beheld him no longer.

But, short were the hopes which that parting hour had excited. In a few months the master of the school wrote to complain of the insubordination of his new pupil. In his next letter he declared that he should soon be under the necessity of expelling him ; and Edgar had not been at school six months, before he prevented the threatened expulsion, only by running away, no one knew whither !

Nor was he heard of by his family for four years ; during which time, not even the dutiful affection of their other sons, nor their success in life, had power to heal the breaking heart of the mother, nor cheer the depressed spirits of the father. At length the prodigal returned, ill, meagre, penniless, and penitent ; and was received, and forgiven. “ But where hast thou been, my child, this long, long time ? ” said his mother, tenderly weeping, as she gazed on his pale sunk cheek. “ Ask me no questions ! I am here ; that is enough ; ” Edgar Vernon replied, shuddering as he spake. “ It is enough ! ” cried his mother, throwing herself on his neck ! “ For this, my son, was dead, and is alive again ; was lost, and is found ! ” But the father felt and thought differently : he knew that it was his duty to interrogate his son ;

and he resolved to insist on knowing where and how those long four years had been passed. He resolved, however, to delay his questions till his Edgar's health was re-established, and when that time arrived, he told him that he expected to know all that had befallen him since he ran away from school."—" Spare me till to-morrow," said Edgar Vernon, " and then you shall know all." His father acquiesced ; but the next morning Edgar had disappeared, leaving the following letter behind him :—

" I cannot, dare not, tell you what a wretch I have been ! though I own your right to demand such a confession from me. Therefore, I must become a wanderer again ! Pray for me, dearest and tenderest of mothers ! Pray for me, best of fathers and of men ! I dare not pray for myself, for I am a vile and

wretched sinner, though your grateful and affectionate son, E. V.”

Though this letter nearly drove the mother to distraction, it contained for the father a degree of soothing comfort. She dwelt only on the conviction which it held out to her, that she should probably never behold her son again ; but *he* dwelt with pious thankfulness on the sense of his guilt, expressed by the unhappy writer ; trusting that the sinner who knows and owns himself to be “vile” may, when it is least expected of him, repent and amend.

How had those four years been passed by Edgar Vernon ? That important period of a boy’s life, the years from fourteen to eighteen ? Suffice it that, under a feigned name, in order that he might not be traced, he had entered on board a merchant ship ; that he had left it after he had

made one voyage ; that he was taken into the service of what is called a *sporting character*, whom he had met on board ship, who saw that Edgar had talents and spirit which he might render serviceable to his own pursuits. This man, finding he was the son of a gentleman, treated him as such, and initiated him gradually into the various arts of gambling, and the vices of the metropolis ; but one night they were both surprised by the officers of justice at a noted gaming-house ; and, after a desperate scuffle, Edgar escaped wounded, and nearly killed, to a house in the suburbs. There he remained till he was safe from pursuit, and then, believing himself in danger of dying, he longed for the comfort of his paternal roof ; he also longed for paternal forgiveness ; and the prodigal returned to his forgiving parents.



But, as this was a tale which Edgar might well shrink from relating to a pure and pious father, flight was far easier than such a confession. Still, “so deceitful is the human heart, and desperately wicked,” that I believe Edgar was beginning to feel the monotony of his life at home, and therefore was glad of an excuse to justify to himself his desire to escape into scenes more congenial to his habits and, now, perverted nature. His father, however, continued to hope for his reformation, and was therefore little prepared for the next intelligence of his son, which reached him through a private channel. A friend wrote to inform him that Edgar was taken up for having passed forged notes, knowing them to be forgeries; that he would soon be fully committed to prison for trial; and would be tried with his accom-

plices at the ensuing assizes for Middlesex.

At first, even the firmness of Vernon yielded to the stroke, and he was bowed low unto the earth. But the confiding christian struggled against the sorrows of the suffering father, and overcame them; till, at last, he was able to exclaim, "I will go to him! I will be near him at his trial! I will be near him even at his death, if death be his portion! And, no doubt, I shall be permitted to awaken him to a sense of his guilt. Yes, I may be permitted to see him expire contrite before God and man, and calling on his name who is able to save to the uttermost!" But, just as he was setting off for Middlesex, his wife, who had long been declining, was, to all appearance, so much worse, that he could not leave her. She, having had sus-

pitions that all was not right with Edgar, contrived to discover the TRUTH, which had been *kindly*, but erroneously, concealed from her, and had sunk under the sudden, *unmitigated* blow; and the welcome intelligence, that the *prosecutor had withdrawn the charge*, came at a moment when the sorrows of the bereaved husband had closed the father's heart against the voice of gladness.

“This good news came too late to save thee, poor victim!” he exclaimed, as he knelt beside the corpse of her whom he had loved so long and so tenderly; “and I feel that I cannot, cannot *yet* rejoice in it as I ought.” But he soon repented of this ungrateful return to the mercy of Heaven; and, even before the body was consigned to the grave, he thankfully acknowledged that the liberation of his

son was a ray amidst the gloom that surrounded him.

Meanwhile, Edgar Vernon, when unexpectedly liberated from what he knew to be certain danger to his life, resolved, on the ground of having been falsely taken up, and as an innocent, injured man, to visit his parents; for he had heard of his mother's illness; and his heart yearned to behold her once more. But it was only in the dark hour that he dared venture to approach his home: and it was his intention to discover himself at first to his mother only.

Accordingly, the gray parsonage was scarcely visible in the shadows of twilight, when he reached the gate that led to the back door; at which he gently knocked, but in vain. No one answered his knock; all was still within and around. What could this

mean? He then walked round the house, and looked in at the window; all there was dark and quiet as the grave; but the church bell was tolling, while alarmed, awed, and overpowered, he leaned against the gate. At this moment he saw two men rapidly pass along the road, saying, “I fear we shall be too late for the funeral! I wonder how the poor old man will bear it! for he loved his wife dearly!” —“Aye; and so he did that wicked boy, who has been the death of her;” replied the other.

These words shot like an arrow through the not yet callous heart of Edgar Vernon, and, throwing himself on the ground, he groaned aloud in his agony; but the next minute, with the speed of desperation, he ran towards the church, and reached it just as the service was over, the mourners

departing, and as his father was borne away, nearly insensible, on the arms of his *virtuous* sons.

At such a moment Edgar was able to enter the church unheeded ; for all eyes were on his afflicted parent ; and the self-convicted culprit dared not force himself, at a time like that, on the notice of the father whom he had so grievously injured. But his poor bursting heart felt that it must vent its agony, or break ; and, ere the coffin was lowered into the vault, he rushed forwards, and, throwing himself across it, called upon his mother's name, in an accent so piteous and appalling, that the assistants, though they did not recognize him at first, were unable to drive him away ; so awed, so affected, were they by the agony which they witnessed.

At length he rose up and endeavour-

ed to speak, but in vain ; then, holding his clenched fists to his forehead, he screamed out, “ Heaven preserve my senses ! ” and rushed from the church with all the speed of desperation. But whither should he turn those desperate steps ! He longed, earnestly longed, to go and humble himself before his father, and implore that pardon for which his agonized soul pined. But, alas ! earthly pride forbade him to indulge the salutary feeling ; for he knew his worthy, unoffending brothers were in the house, and he could not endure the mortification of encountering those whose virtues must be put in comparison with his vices. He therefore cast one long lingering look at the abode of his childhood, and fled for ever from the house of mourning, humiliation, and safety.

In a few days, however, he wrote to

his father, detailing his reasons for visiting home, and all the agonies which he had experienced during his short stay. Full of consolation was this letter to that bereaved and mourning heart! for to him it seemed the language of contrition; and he lamented that his beloved wife was not alive, to share in the hope which it gave him. “Would that he had come, or would *now* come to me!” he exclaimed; but the letter had no date; and he knew not whither to send an invitation. But, *where* was he, and *what* was he, at that period? In gambling-houses, at cock-fights, sparring-matches, fairs; and in every scene where profligacy prevailed the most; while at all these places he had a preeminence in skill, which endeared these pursuits to him, and made his occasional contrition powerless to influence him to amendment of



life. He therefore continued to disregard the warning voice within him ; till, at length, it was no longer heeded.

One night, when on his way to Y——, where races were to succeed the assizes, which had just commenced, he stopped at an inn, to refresh his horse ; and, being hot with riding, and depressed by some recent losses at play, he drank very freely of the spirits which he had ordered. At this moment he saw a schoolfellow of his in the bar, who, like himself, was on his way to Y——. This young man was of a coarse, unfeeling nature ; and, having had a fortune left him, was full of the consequence of newly-acquired wealth.

Therefore, when Edgar Vernon impulsively approached him, and, putting his hand out, asked how he did, Dunham haughtily drew back, put his

hands behind him, and, in the hearing of several persons, replied, "I do not know you, sir!"—"Not *know* me, Dunham?" cried Edgar Vernon, turning very pale. "That is to say, I do not *choose* to know you."—"And why not?" cried Edgar, seizing his arm, and with a look of menace. "Because.... because.... I do not choose to know a man who murdered his mother." "Murdered his mother!" cried the by-standers, holding up their hands, and regarding Edgar Vernon with a look of horror. "Wretch!" cried he, seizing Dunham in his powerful grasp, "explain yourself this moment," or....—"Then take your fingers from my throat!" Edgar did so; and Dunham said, "I meant only that you broke your mother's heart by your ill conduct; and, pray, was not that murdering her?" While he was saying

this, Edgar Vernon stood with folded arms, rolling his eyes wildly from one of the by-standers to the other; and seeing, as he believed, disgust towards him in the countenances of them all. When Dunham had finished speaking, Edgar Vernon wrung his hands in agony, saying, “true, most true, I am a murderer! I am a parricide! Then, suddenly drinking off a large glass of brandy near him, he quitted the room, and, mounting his horse, rode off at full speed. Aim and object in view, he had *none*; he was only trying to ride from himself; trying to escape from those looks of horror and aversion which the remarks of Dunham had provoked. But what right had Dunham so to provoke him?

After he had put this question to himself, the image of Dunham, scornfully rejecting his hand, alone took

possession of his remembrance, till he thirsted for revenge ; and the irritation of the moment urged him to seek it immediately.

The opportunity, as he rightly suspected, was in his power ; Dunham would soon be coming that way on his road to Y—— ; and he would meet him. He did so ; and, riding up to him, seized the bridle of his horse, exclaiming, “ you have called me a murderer, Dunham ; and you were right ; for, though I loved my mother dearly, and would have died for her, I killed her by my wicked course of life ! ” — “ Well, well ; I know *that*, ” replied Dunham, “ so let me go ! for I tell you I do not like to be seen with such as you. Let me go, I say ! ”

He *did* let him go ; but it was as the tyger lets go its prey, to spring on it again. A blow from Edgar’s nerv-

ous arm knocked the rash insulter from his horse. In another minute Dunham lay on the road, a bleeding corpse ; and the next morning officers were out in pursuit of the murderer. That wretched man was soon found, and soon secured. Indeed, he had not desired to *avoid* pursuit ; but, as soon as the irritation of drunkenness and revenge had subsided, the agony of remorse took possession of his soul ; and he confessed his crime with tears of the bitterest penitence. To be brief : Edgar Vernon was carried into that city as a manacled criminal, which he had expected to leave as a successful gambler ; and, before the end of the assizes, he was condemned to death.

He made a full confession of his guilt before the judge pronounced condemnation ; gave a brief statement of the provocation which he received

from the deceased ; blaming himself at the same time for his criminal revenge, in so heart-rending a manner, and lamenting so pathetically the disgrace and misery in which he had involved his father and family, that every heart was melted to compassion ; and the judge wept, while he passed on him the awful sentence of the law.

His conduct in prison was so exemplary, that it proved he had not forgotten his father's precepts, though he had not acted upon them ; and his brothers, for whom he sent, found him in a state of mind which afforded them the only and best consolation. This contrite lowly christian state of mind accompanied him to the awful end of his existence ; and it might be justly said of him, that " nothing in his life became him like the losing it."

Painful, indeed, was the anxiety of

Edgar and his brothers, lest their father should learn this horrible circumstance : but as the culprit was arraigned under a feigned name, and as the crime, trial, and execution, had taken, and would take up, so short a period of time, they flattered themselves that he would never learn how and where Edgar died ; but would implicitly believe what was told him. They therefore wrote him word that Edgar had been taken ill at an inn, near London, on his *road home* ; that he had sent for them ; and they had little hopes of his recovery. They followed this letter of BENEVOLENT LIES as soon as they could, to inform him that all was over.

This plan was wholly disapproved by a friend of the family, who, on principle, thought all concealment wrong ; and, probably, useless too.

When the brothers drove to his house, on their way home, he said to them, “ I found your father in a state of deep submission to the divine will, though grieved at the loss of a child, whom not even his errors could drive from his affections. I also found him consoled by these expressions of filial love and reliance on the merits of his Redeemer, which you transmitted to him from Edgar himself. Now, as the poor youth died penitent, and as his crime was palliated by great provocation, I conceive that it would not add much to your father’s distress, were he to be informed of the truth. You know that, from a principle of obedience to the implied designs of Providence, I object to any concealment on such occasions, but on this, disclosure would certainly be a *safer*, as well as a more *proper*, mode



of proceeding ; for, though he does not read newspapers, he may one day learn the fact as it is ; and then the consequence may be fatal to life or reason. Remember how ill concealment answered in your poor mother's case." But he argued in vain. However, he obtained leave to go with them to their father, that he might judge of the possibility of making the disclosure which he advised.

They found the poor old man leaning his head upon an open Bible, as though he had been praying over it. The sight of his sons in mourning told the tale which he dreaded to hear ; and, wringing their hands in silence, he left the room, but soon returned ; and, with surprising composure, said, " Well ; now I can bear to hear particulars." When they had told him all they chose to relate, he exclaim-

ed, melting into tears, “Enough!— Oh, my dear sons and dear friend, it is a sad and grievous thing for a father to own; but I feel this sorrow to be a blessing! I had always feared that he would die a violent death, either by his own hand, or that of the executioner; (here the sons looked triumphantly at each other;) therefore, his dying a penitent, and with humble, christian reliance, is *such a relief to my mind!*” Yes; I feared he might commit forgery, or even murder; and that would have been dreadful!”— “Dreadful, indeed!” faltered out both the brothers, bursting into tears; while Osborne, choked, and almost convinced, turned to the window. “Yet,” added he, “even in that case, if he had died penitent, I trust that I could have borne the blow, and been able to believe the soul of my unhappy boy

would find mercy!" Here Osborne eagerly turned round, and would have ventured to tell the truth; but was withheld by the frowns of his companions, and the truth *was not told*.

Edgar had not been dead above seven months, before a visible change took place in his father's spirits, and expression of countenance;—for the constant dread of his coming to a terrible end had hitherto preyed on his mind, and rendered his appearance haggard; but now he looked and was cheerful; therefore his sons rejoiced, whenever they visited him, that they had not taken Osborne's advice. "You are wrong," said he, "he would have been just as well, if he had known the manner of Edgar's death. It is not his *ignorance*, but the cessation of anxious suspense, that has thus renovated him. However, he may go in this ig-

norance to his grave ; and I earnestly hope he will do so.”—“ Amen ;” said one of his sons ; for his life is most precious to our children, as well as to us. Our little boys are improving so fast under his tuition !

The consciousness of recovering health, as a painful affection of the breath and heart had greatly subsided since the death of Edgar, made the good old man wish to visit, during the summer months, an old college friend, who lived in Yorkshire ; and he communicated his intentions to his sons. But they highly disapproved them, because, though Edgar’s dreadful death was not likely to be revealed to him in the little village of R——, it might be disclosed to him by some one or other during a long journey.

However, as he was bent on going, they could not find a sufficient excuse

for preventing it ; but they took every precaution possible. They wrote to their father's intended host, desiring him to keep all papers and magazines for the last seven months out of his way ; and when the day of his departure arrived, Osborne himself went to take a place for him ; and took care it should be in that coach which did not stop at, or go through York, in order to obviate all possible chance of his hearing the murder discussed. But it so happened that a family, going from the town whence the coach started, wanted the whole of it ; and, without leave, Vernon's place was transferred to the other coach, which went the very road Osborne disapproved. " Well, well ; it is the same thing to me ;" said the good old man, when he was informed of the change ; and he set off, full of pious thankfulness for the affec-

tionate conduct and regrets of his parishioners at the moment of his departure, as they lined the road along which the coach was to pass, and expressed even clamorously their wishes for his return.

The coach stopped at an inn outside the city of York ; and as Vernon was not disposed to eat any dinner, he strolled along the road, till he came to a small church, pleasantly situated, and entered the churchyard to read, as was his custom, the inscriptions on the tombstones. While thus engaged, he saw a man filling up a new-made grave, and entered into conversation with him. He found it was the sexton himself ; and he drew from him several anecdotes of the persons interred around them.

During this conversation they had walked over the whole of the ground,

when, just as they were going to leave the spot, the sexton stopped to pluck some weeds from a grave near the corner of it, and Vernon stopped also ; taking hold, as he did so, of a small willow sapling, planted near the corner itself.

As the man rose from his occupation, and saw where Vernon stood, he smiled significantly, and said, “ I planted that willow ; and it is on a grave, though the grave is not marked out.”—“ Indeed ! ”—“ Yes ; it is the grave of a murderer.”—“ Of a murderer ! ”—echoed Vernon, instinctively shuddering, and moving away from it.—“ Yes,” resumed he, “ of a murderer who was hanged at York. Poor lad ! it was very right that he should be hanged ; but he was not a hardened villain ! and he died so penitent ! and, as I knew him when he used to visit where

I was groom, I could not help planting this tree, for old acquaintance' sake." Here he drew his hand across his eyes. "Then he was not a low-born man."—"Oh no; his father was a clergyman, I think."—"Indeed! poor man: was he living at the time?" said Vernon, deeply sighing. "Oh yes; for his poor son did so fret, lest his father should ever know what he had done; for he said he was an angel upon earth; and he could not bear to think how he would grieve; for, poor lad, he loved his father and his mother too, though he did so badly."—"Is his mother living?"—"No: if she had, he would have been alive; but his evil courses broke her heart; and it was because the man he killed reproached him for having murdered his mother, that he was provoked to murder him."—"Poor, rash, mistaken



youth! then he had provocation.”—  
“Oh yes; the greatest: but he was very sorry for what he had done; and it would have broken your heart to hear him talk of his poor father.”—  
“I am glad I did not hear him,” said Vernon hastily, and in a faltering voice (for he thought of Edgar). “And yet, Sir, it would have done your heart good too.”—“Then he had virtuous feelings, and loved his father amidst all his errors;”—“aye,”—“and I dare say his father loved him, in spite of his faults.”—“I dare say he did,” replied the man; “for one’s children are our own flesh and blood, you know, Sir, after all that is said and done; and may be this young fellow was spoiled in the bringing up.”—“Perhaps so,” said Vernon, sighing deeply. “However, this poor lad made a very good end.”—I am glad of that! and he

lies here," continued Vernon, gazing on the spot with deepening interest, and moving nearer to it as he spoke. "Peace be to his soul! but was he not dissected?"—"Yes; but his brothers got leave to have the body after dissection. They came to me; and we buried it privately at night."—"His brothers came! and who were his brothers?"—"Merchants, in London; and it was a sad cut on them; but they took care that their father should not know it."—"No!" cried Vernon, turning sick at heart. "Oh no; they wrote *him* word that his son was ill; then went to Westmoreland, and . . . . ."—"Tell me," interrupted Vernon, gasping for breath, and laying his hand on his arm, tell me the name of this poor youth!"—"Why, he was tried under a false name, for the sake of his family; but

his real name was Edgar Vernon!"

The agonized parent drew back, shuddered violently and repeatedly, casting up his eyes to heaven at the same time, with a look of mingled appeal and resignation. He then rushed to the obscure spot which covered the bones of his son, threw himself upon it, and stretched his arms over it, as if embracing the unconscious deposit beneath, while his head rested on the grass, and he neither spoke nor moved. But he uttered one groan: then all was stillness!

His terrified and astonished companion remained motionless for a few moments,—then stooped to raise him; but the FIAT OF MERCY had gone forth, and the paternal heart, broken by the sudden shock, had suffered, and breathed its last.

## CHAP. XL.

## LIES OF WANTONNESS.

I COME now to LIES OF WANTONNESS; that is, lies told from no other motive but a love of lying, and to shew the utterer's total contempt for truth, and for those scrupulous persons of their acquaintance who look on it with reverence, and endeavour to act up to their principles: lies, having their origin merely in a depraved fondness for speaking and inventing falsehood. Not that persons of this description confine their falsehoods to this sort of lying: on the contrary, they lie after this fashion, because they have ex-

hausted the strongly-motived and more natural sorts of lying. In such as these, there is no more hope of amendment than there is for the man of intemperate habits, who has exhausted life of its pleasures, and his constitution of its energy. Such persons must go despised and (terrible state of human degradation !) untrusted, unbelieved, into their graves.

PRACTICAL LIES come last on my list ; lies not UTTERED, but ACTED ; and dress will furnish me with most of my illustrations.

It has been said that the great art of dress is to CONCEAL DEFECTS and HEIGHTEN BEAUTIES ; therefore, as concealment is deception, this great art of dress is founded on falsehood ; but, certainly, in some instances, on falsehood, *comparatively*, of an innocent kind.

If the false hair be so worn, that no one can fancy it natural ; if the bloom on the cheek is such, that it cannot be mistaken for nature ; or, if the person who “conceals defects, and heightens beauties,” openly avows the practice, then is the deception annihilated. But, if the cheek be so artfully tinted, that its hue is mistaken for natural colour ; if the false hair be so skilfully woven, that it passes for natural hair ; if the crooked person, or meagre form, be so cunningly assisted by dress, that the uneven shoulder disappears, and becoming fulness succeeds to unbecoming thinness, while the man or woman thus assisted by art expects their charms will be imputed to *nature* alone ; then these aids of dress partake of the nature of other lying, and become equally vicious in the eyes of the religious and the moral.

I have said the *man* or woman so assisted by art; and I believe that, by including the *stronger* sex in the above observation, I have only been *strictly just*.

While men hide baldness by gluing a piece of false hair on their heads, *meaning* that it should pass for their own, and while a false calf gives muscular beauty to a shapeless leg, can the observer on human life do otherwise than include the wiser sex in the list of those who indulge in the permitted artifices and mysteries of the toilet? Nay; bolder still are the advances of some men into its sacred mysteries. I have seen the eyebrows, even of the young, darkened by the hand of art, and their cheeks reddened by its touch; and who has not seen, in Bond Street, or *the Drive*, during the last twenty or thirty years,

certain notorious men of fashion glowing in immortal bloom, and rivalling the dashing belle beside them?

The following also are PRACTICAL LIES of every day's experience.

Wearing paste for diamonds, intending that the false should be taken for the true; and purchasing brooches, pins, and rings of mock jewels, intending that they should pass for real ones. Passing off gooseberry-wine at dinner for real Champagne, and English *liqueurs* for foreign ones. But, on these occasions, the motive is not always the mean and contemptible wish of imposing on the credulity of others; but it has sometimes its source in a dangerous as well as deceptive ambition, *that of making an appearance beyond what the circumstances of the persons so deceiving really warrant; the wish to be supposed to be more opulent than*



*they really are ; that most common of all the practical lies ; as ruin and bankruptcy follow in its train.* The lady who purchases and wears paste, which she hopes will pass for diamonds, is usually one who has no right to wear jewels at all ; and the gentleman who passes off gooseberry-wine for Champagne is, in all probability, aiming at a style of living beyond his situation in society.

On some occasions, however, when ladies substitute paste for diamonds, the substitution tells a tale of greater error still. I mean, when ladies wear mock for real jewels, because their extravagance has obliged them to raise money on the latter ; and they are therefore constrained to keep up the appearance of their necessary and accustomed splendour, by a PRACTICAL LIE.

The following is another of the PRACTICAL LIES in common use.

The medical man, who desires his servant to call him out of church, or from a party, in order to give him the appearance of the great business which he has *not*, is guilty not of uttering but of *acting* a falsehood; and the author also, who makes his publisher put second and third editions before a work of which, perhaps, not even the first edition is sold.

But, the most fatal to the interests of others, though perhaps the most pitiable of practical lies, are those acted by men who, though they know themselves to be in the gulf of bankruptcy, either from wishing to put off the evil day, or from the visionary hope that something will occur unexpectedly to save them, launch out into increased splendour of living, in order

to obtain further credit, and induce their acquaintances to intrust their money to them.

There is, however, one PRACTICAL LIE more fatal still, in my opinion ; because it is the practice of schools, and consequently the sin of early life ; —a period of existence in which it is desirable, both for general and individual good, that habits of truth and integrity should be acquired, and strictly adhered to. I mean the pernicious custom which prevails amongst boys, and probably girls, of getting their schoolfellows to do their exercises for them, or consenting to do the same office for others.

Some will say, “ but it would be so ill-natured to refuse to write one’s schoolfellows’ exercises, especially when one is convinced that they cannot write them for themselves.” But,

leaving the question of truth and falsehood *unargued* a while, let us examine coolly that of the probable good or evil done to the parties obliged.

What are children sent to school for?—to learn. And when there, what are the motives which are to make them learn? dread of punishment, and hope of distinction and reward. There are few children so stupid, as not to be led on to industry by one or both of these motives, however indolent they may be; but, if these motives be not allowed their proper scope of action, the stupid boy will never take the trouble to learn, if he finds that he can avoid punishment, and gain reward, by prevailing on some more diligent boy to do his exercises for him. Those, therefore, who thus indulge their schoolfellows, do it at the expense of their future wel-

fare, and are in reality *foes* where they fancied themselves *friends*. But, generally speaking, they have not even *this* excuse for their pernicious compliance, since it springs from want of sufficient firmness to say no,—and deny an earnest request at the command of principle. But, to such I would put this question. “Which is the real friend to a child, the person who gives it the sweetmeats which it asks for, at the risk of making it ill, merely because it were *so hard* to refuse the dear little thing; or the person who, considering only the interest and health of the child, resists its importunities, though grieved to deny its request? No doubt that they would give the palm of *real* kindness, *real* good-nature to the *latter*; and in like manner, the boy who *refuses* to do his schoolfellow’s task is more truly kind,

more truly good-natured, to him than he who, by indulging his indolence, runs the risk of making him a dunce for life.

But some may reply, “It would make one *odious* in the school, were one to refuse this common compliance with the wants and wishes of one’s companions.”—Not if the refusal were declared to be the result of principle, and every aid not contrary to it ~~were~~ offered and afforded; and there are many ways in which schoolfellows may assist each other, without any violation of truth, and without sharing with them in the PRACTICAL LIE, by imposing on their masters, as theirs, lessons which they never wrote.

This common practice in schools is a PRACTICAL LIE of considerable importance, from its frequency; and because, as I before observed, the re-

sult of it is, that the first step which a child sets in a school is into the midst of deceit—tolerated, cherished, deceit. For, if children are quick at learning, they are called upon immediately to enable others to deceive; and, if dull, they are enabled to appear in borrowed plumes themselves.

How often have I heard men in mature life say, “Oh! I knew such a one at school; he was a very good fellow, but so dull! I have often done his exercises for him.” Or, I have heard the contrary asserted. “Such a one was a very clever boy at school indeed; he has done many an exercise for me; for he was *very good-natured*.” And in neither case was the speaker conscious that he had been guilty of the meanness of deception himself, or been accessory to it in another.

Parents also correct their children's exercises, and thereby enable them to put a deceit on the master ; not only by this means convincing their offspring of their own total disregard of truth ; a conviction doubtless most pernicious in its effects on their young minds ; but as full of folly as it is of laxity of principle ; since the deceit cannot fail of being detected, whenever the parents are not at hand to afford their assistance.

But, is it *necessary* that this school delinquency should exist ? Is it not advisable that children should learn the rudiments of truth, rather than falsehood, with those of their mother tongue and the classics ? Surely masters and mistresses should watch over the morals, while improving the *minds* of youth. Surely parents ought to be tremblingly solicitous that their chil-



dren should always speak truth, and be corrected by their preceptors for uttering falsehood. Yet, of what use could it be to correct a child for telling a spontaneous lie, on the impulse of strong temptation, if that child be in the daily habit of deceiving his master on system, and of assisting others to do so? While the present practice with regard to exercise-making exists; while boys and girls go up to their preceptors with lies in their hands, whence, sometimes, no doubt, they are transferred to their lips; every hope that truth will be taught in schools, as a necessary moral duty, must be totally, and for ever, annihilated.

## CHAP. XII.

OUR OWN EXPERIENCE OF THE PAINFUL RESULTS OF  
LYING.

I CANNOT point out the mischievous nature and impolicy of lying better than by referring my readers to their own experience. Which of them does not know some few persons, at least, from whose habitual disregard of truth they have often suffered; and with whom they find intimacy unpleasant, as well as unsafe; because confidence, that charm and cement of intimacy, is wholly wanting in the intercourse? Which of my readers is not sometimes obliged to say, “ I

ought to add, that my authority for what I have just related, is only Mr. and Mrs. such-a-one, or a certain young lady, or a certain young gentleman ; therefore, you know what credit is to be given to it."

It has been asserted, that every town and village has its idiot ; and, with equal truth, probably, it may be advanced, that every one's circle of acquaintances contains one or more persons known to be habitual liars, and always mentioned as such. I may be asked, "if this be so, of what consequence is it ? And how is it mischievous ? If such persons are known and chronicled as liars, they can deceive no one ; and, therefore, can do no harm." But this is not true : we are not always on our guard, either against our own weakness, or against that of others ; and if the most notorious liar

tells us something which we wish to believe, our wise resolution never to credit or repeat what he has told us, fades before our desire to confide in him on this occasion. Thus, even in spite of caution, we become the agents of his falsehood ; and, though lovers of truth, are the assistants of lying.

Nor are there many of my readers, I venture to pronounce, who have not at some time or other of their lives, had cause to lament some violation of truth, of which they themselves were guilty, and which, at the time, they considered as wise, or positively unavoidable.

But the greatest proof of the impolicy even of occasional lying is, that it exposes one to the danger of never being believed in future. It is difficult to give implicit credence to those who have once deceived us ; when they did

so deceive, they were governed by a motive sufficiently powerful to overcome their regard for truth ; and how can one ever be sure, that equal temptation is not always present, and always overcoming them ?

Admitting, that perpetual distrust attends on those who are known to be frequent violaters of truth, it seems to me that the liar is, as if he was *not*. He is, as it were, annihilated for all the important purposes of life. That man or woman is no better than a non-entity, whose simple assertion is not credited immediately. Those whose words no one dares to repeat, without naming their *authority*, lest the information conveyed by them should be too implicitly credited, such persons, I repeat it, exist, as if they existed *not*. They resemble that diseased eye, which, though perfect in colour,

and appearance, is wholly useless, because it cannot perform the function for which it was created, that of *seeing* ; for, of what use to others, and of what benefit to themselves, can those be whose tongues are always suspected of uttering falsehood, and whose words, instead of inspiring confidence, that soul and cement of society, and of mutual regard, are received with offensive distrust, and never repeated without caution and apology ?

I shall now endeavour to shew, that speaking the truth does not imply a necessity to wound the feelings of any one ; but that, even if the unrestricted practice of truth in society did at first give pain to self-love, it would, in the end, further the best views of benevolence ; namely, moral improvement.

There cannot be any reason why

*offensive* or *home* truths should be *volunteered*, because one lays it down as a principle that truth must be spoken, when *called for*. If I put a question to another which may, if truly answered, wound either my sensibility or my self-love, I should be rightly served, if replied to by a *home truth*; but, taking conversation according to its general tenor—that is, under the usual restraints of decorum and propriety—truth and benevolence will, I believe, be found to go hand in hand; and not, as is commonly imagined, be opposed to each other. For instance, if a person in company be old, plain, affected, vulgar in manners, or dressed in a manner unbecoming their years, my utmost love of truth would never lead me to say, “how old you look! or how plain you are! or how improperly dressed! or how vulgar! and how

affected ! But, if this person were to say to me, “ do I not look old ? am I not plain ? am I not improperly dressed ? am I vulgar in manners ? ” and so on, I own that, according to my principles, I must, in my reply, adhere to the strict truth, after having vainly tried to avoid answering, by a serious expostulation on the folly, impropriety, and indelicacy of putting such a question to any one. And what would the consequence be ? The person so answered, would, probably, never like me again. Still, by my reply, I might have been of the greatest service to the indiscreet questioner. If ugly, the inquirer being convinced that not on outward charms could he or she build their pretensions to please, might study to improve in the more permanent graces of mind and manner. If growing old, the inquirer



might be led by my reply to reflect seriously on the brevity of life, and try to grow in grace while advancing in years. If ill-dressed, or in a manner unbecoming a certain time of life, the inquirer might be led to improve in this particular, and be no longer exposed to the sneer of detraction. If vulgar, the inquirer might be induced to keep a watch in future over the admitted vulgarity; and, if affected, might endeavour at greater simplicity, and less pretension in appearance.

Thus, the temporary wound to the self-love of the enquirer might be attended with lasting benefit; and benevolence in reality be not wounded, but gratified. Besides, as I have before observed, the truly benevolent can always find a balm for the wounds which duty obliges them to inflict.

Few persons are so entirely devoid

of external and internal charms, as not to be subjects for some kind of commendation ; therefore, I believe, that means may always be found to smooth down the plumes of that self-love which principle has obliged us to ruffle. But, if it were to become a general principle of action in society to utter spontaneous truth, the difficult situation in which I have painted the utterers of truth to be placed, would, in time, be impossible ; for, if certain that the truth would be spoken, and their suspicions concerning their defects confirmed, none would dare to put such questions as I have enumerated. Those questions sprung from the hope of being contradicted and flattered, and were that hope annihilated, no one would ever so question again.

I shall observe here, that those who make mortifying observations on the

personal defects of their friends, or on any infirmity either of body or mind, are not actuated by the love of truth, or by any good motive whatever; but that such unpleasant sincerity is merely the result of coarseness of mind, and a mean desire to inflict pain and mortification; therefore, if the utterer of them be noble, or even royal, I should still bring a charge against them, terrible to “ears polite,” that of ill-breeding and positive *vulgarity*.

All human beings are convinced in the closet of the importance of truth to the interests of society, and of the mischief which they experience from lying, though few, comparatively, think the practice of the one, and avoidance of the other, binding either on the christian or the moralist, when they are acting in the busy scenes of the world. Nor, can I wonder at this

inconsistency, when boys and girls, as I have before remarked, however they may be taught to speak the truth at home, are so often tempted into the tolerated commission of falsehood as soon as they set their foot into a public school.

But we must wonder still less at the little shame which attaches to what is called WHITE LYING, when we see it sanctioned in the highest assemblies in this kingdom.

It is with fear and humility that I venture to blame a custom prevalent in our legislative meetings; which, as christianity is declared to be “part and parcel of the law of the land,” ought to be christian as well as wise; and where every member feeling it binding on him individually, to act according to the legal oath, should speak the truth, and nothing *but* the truth.”

Yet, what is the real state of things there on some occasions?

In the heat, (the pardonable heat, perhaps,) of political debates, and from the excitement produced by collision of wits, a noble lord, or an honourable commoner, is betrayed into severe personal comment on his antagonist. The *unavoidable* consequence, as it is *thought*, is apology, or duel.

But, as these assemblies are called christian, even the warriors present deem apology a more proper proceeding than duel. Yet, how is apology to be made consistent with the dignity and dictates of worldly honour? And how can the necessity of duel, that savage heathenish disgrace to a civilized and christian land, be at once obviated? Oh! the method is easy enough. "It is as easy as lying," and

lying is the remedy. A noble lord, or an honourable member gets up, and says, that undoubtedly his noble or honourable friend used such and such words; but, no doubt, that by those words he did not mean what those words usually mean; but he meant so and so. Some one on the other side immediately rises on behalf of the *offended*, and says, that if the *offender* will say that by so and so, he did not mean so and so, the *offended* will be perfectly satisfied. On which the offender rises, declares that by *black* he did not mean *black*, but *white*; in short, that black is white, and white black; the offended says, enough;—I am satisfied! the honourable house is satisfied also that life is put out of peril, and what is called honour is satisfied by the sacrifice ONLY of truth.

I must beg leave to state, that no

one can rejoice more fervently than myself when these disputes terminate without duels ; but must there be a victim ? and must that victim be truth ? As there is no intention to deceive on these occasions, nor wish, nor expectation to do so, the soul, the essence of lying, is not in the transaction on the side of the *offender*. But the *offended* is forced to say that *he* is satisfied, when he certainly can *not* be so. He knows that the *offender* meant, at the moment, what he said ; therefore, he is *not* satisfied when he is told, in order to return his half-drawn sword to the scabbard, or his pistol to the holdster, that black means white, and white means black.

However, he has his resource ; he may ultimately tell the truth, declare himself, when out of the house, unsatisfied ; and may (horrible alterna-

tive!) *peril* his life, or that of his opponent. But is there no other course which can be pursued by him who gave the offence? Must apology to *satisfy* be made in the language of falsehood? Could it not be made in the touching and impressive language of truth? Might not the perhaps already penitent offender say “no; I will not be guilty of the meanness of subterfuge. By the words which I uttered, I meant at the moment what those words conveyed, and nothing else. But I then saw through the medium of passion; I spoke in the heat of resentment; and I now scruple not to say that I am sorry for what I said, and entreat the pardon of him whom I offended. If he be not satisfied, I know the consequences, and must take the responsibility.”

Surely an apology like this would



satisfy any one however offended; and if the adversary were not contented, the noble or honourable house would undoubtedly deem his resentment brutal, and he would be constrained to pardon the offender in order to avoid disgrace.

But I am not contented with the conclusion of the apology which I have put into the mouth of the offending party; for I have made him willing, if necessary, to comply with the requirings of *worldly honour*. Instead of ending his apology in that unholy manner, I should have wished to end it thus:—"But if this heart-felt apology be not sufficient to appease the anger of him whom I have *offended*, and he expects me, in order to expiate my fault, to meet him in the lawless warfare of single combat, I solemnly declare that I will not so meet him; that

not even the dread of being accused of cowardice, and being frowned on by those whose respect I value, shall induce me put in peril either his life or my own."

If he and his opponent be married men, and, above all, if he be *indeed* a christian, he might add, "I will not, for any *personal* considerations, run the risk of making his wife and mine a widow, and his children and my own fatherless. I will not run the risk of disappointing that confiding tenderness which looks up to us for happiness and protection, by any rash and selfish action of mine. But, I am not actuated to this refusal by this consideration alone; I am withheld by one more binding and more powerful still. For I remember the precepts taught in the Bible, and confirmed in the New Testament; and I

cannot, will not, *dare* not, enter into single and deadly combat, in opposition to that awful command, “thou shalt not kill !”

Would any one, however narrow and worldly in his conceptions, venture to condemn as a coward, meanly shrinking from the responsibility he had incurred, the man that could dare to put forth sentiments like these, regardless of that fearful thing, “the world’s dread laugh ?”

There might be some among his hearers by whom this truly noble daring could not possibly be appreciated. But, though in both houses of parliament, there might be heroes present, whose heads are even bowed down by the weight of their laurels ; men whose courage has often paled the cheek of their enemies in battle, and brought the loftiest low ; still, (I must venture

to assert) he who can dare, for the sake of conscience, to speak and act counter to the prejudices and passions of the world, at the risk of losing his standing in society, such a man is a hero in the best sense of the word ; his is courage of the most difficult kind ; that moral courage, founded indeed on *fear*, but a fear that tramples firmly on every fear of man ; for it is that holy fear, the FEAR OF GOD.

## CHAP. XIII.

## LYING THE MOST COMMON OF ALL VICES.

I HAVE observed in the preceding chapter, and elsewhere, that all persons, in *theory*, consider lying as a most odious, mean, and pernicious practice. It is also one which is more than almost any other reprov'd, if not punished, both in servants and children;—for parents, those excepted, whose moral sense has been rendered utterly callous, or who never possessed any, mourn over the slightest deviation from truth in their offspring, and visit it with instant punishment. Who has

not frequently heard masters and mistresses of families declaring that some of their servants were such liars that they could keep them no longer? Yet, trying and painful as *intercourse* with liars is universally allowed to be, since confidence, that necessary guardian of domestic peace, cannot exist where they are; lying is, *undoubtedly*, THE MOST COMMON OF ALL VICES. A friend of mine was once told by a confessor, that it was the one most *frequently confessed* to him; and I am sure that if we enter society with eyes open to detect this propensity, we shall soon be convinced, that there are few, if any, of our acquaintance, however distinguished for virtue, who are not, on some occasions, led by good and sufficient motives, in their own opinion at least, either to violate or withhold the truth

with intent to deceive. Nor do their most conscious or even detected deviations from veracity fill the generality of the world with shame or compunction. If they commit any other sins, they shrink from avowing them: but I have often heard persons confess, that they had, on certain occasions, uttered a direct falsehood, with an air which proved them to be proud of the deceptive skill with which it was uttered, adding, “but it was only a white lie, you know,” with a degree of self-complacency which shewed that, in their eyes, a white lie was no lie at all. And what is more common than to hear even the professedly pious, as well as the moral, assert that a deviation from truth, or, at least, withholding the truth, so as to deceive, is sometimes absolutely necessary? Yet, I would seriously ask

of those who thus argue, whether, when they repeat the commandment "thou shalt not steal," they feel willing to admit, either in themselves or others, a mental reservation, allowing them to *pilfer* in any degree, or even in the slightest particular, make free with the property of another? Would they think that pilfering tea or sugar was a venial fault in a servant, and excusable under strong temptations? They would answer "no;" and be ready to say in the words of the apostle, "whosoever in this respect shall offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Yet, I venture to assert, that *little lying*, alias white lying, is as much an infringement of the moral law against "speaking leasing," as little pilfering is of the commandment not to steal; and I defy any consistent moralist to escape from the obligation of



the principle which I here lay down.

The economical rule, “take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves,” may, with great benefit, be applied to morals. Few persons, comparatively, are exposed to the danger of committing *great crimes*, but all are daily and hourly tempted to commit *little sins*. Beware, therefore, of slight deviations from purity and rectitude, and great ones *will take care of themselves*; and the habit of resistance to trivial sins will make you able to resist temptation to errors of a more culpable nature; and as those persons will not be likely to exceed improperly in pounds, who are laudably saving in pence, and as little lies are to *great ones*, what pence are to pounds, if we acquire a habit of telling truth on trivial occasions, we shall never be induced to vio-

late it on serious and important ones.

I shall now borrow the aid of others to strengthen what I have already said on this important subject, or have still to say ; as I am painfully conscious of my own inability to do justice to it ; and if the good which I desire be but effected, I am willing to resign to others the merit of the success.

## CHAP. XIV.

EXTRACTS FROM LORD BACON, AND OTHERS.

IN a gallery of moral philosophers, the rank of Bacon, in my opinion, resembles that of Titian in a gallery of pictures; and some of his successors not only look up to him as authority for certain excellencies, but, making him, in a measure, their study, they endeavour to diffuse over their own productions the beauty of his conceptions, and the depth and breadth of his manner. I am therefore sorry

that those passages in his Essay on Truth which bear upon the subject before me, are so unsatisfactorily brief;—however, as even a sketch from the hand of a master is valuable, I give the following extracts from the essay in question.

“ But to pass from theological and philosophical truth—to truth, or rather veracity, in civil business, it will be acknowledged, even by those that practice it not, that clear and sound dealing is the honour of man’s nature, and that mixture of falsehood is like alloy in coin of gold and silver, which may make the metal work the better, but it embaseth it. For these winding and crooked courses are the goings of the serpent, which goeth basely upon the belly, and not upon the feet. There is no vice that does so overwhelm a man with shame, as

to be found false, or perfidious : and therefore Montaigne saith very acutely, when he inquired the reason, why the giving the lie should be such a disgraceful and odious charge, “ If it be well weighed,” said he, “ to say that a man lies, is as much as to say, he is a bravado towards God, and a coward towards man. For the liar insults God, and crouches to man.”

*Essay on Truth.*

I hoped to have derived considerable assistance from Addison ; as he ranks so very high in the list of moral writers that Dr. Watts said of his greatest work, “ there is so much virtue in the eight volumes of the Spectator, such a reverence of things sacred, so many valuable remarks for our conduct in life, that they are not improper to lie in parlours, or summer-houses, to entertain one’s thoughts in any mo-

ments of leisure.” But, in spite of his fame as a moralist, and of this high eulogium from one of the best authorities, Addison appears to have done very little as an advocate for spontaneous truth, and an assailant of spontaneous lying; and has been much less zealous and effective than either Hawkesworth or Johnson. However, what he has said, is well said; and I have pleasure in giving it.

“The great violation of the point of honour from man to man is, giving the lie. One may tell another that he drinks and blasphemes, and it may pass unnoticed; but to say he lies, though but in jest, is an affront that nothing but blood can expiate. The reason perhaps may be, because no other vice implies a want of courage so much as the making of a lie; and, therefore, telling a man he lies, is

touching him in the most sensible part of honour, and, indirectly, calling him a coward. I cannot omit, under this head, what Herodotus tells us of the ancient Persians; that, from the age of five years to twenty, they instruct their sons only in three things;—to manage the horse, to make use of the bow, and to *speak the truth*.”—SPECTATOR, Letter 99.

I know not whence Addison took the extract, from which I give the following quotation, but I refer my readers to No. 352 of the Spectator.

“Truth is always consistent with itself, and needs nothing to help it out: it is always near at hand, and sits upon our lips, and is ready to drop out, before we are aware: whereas a LIE is troublesome, and sets a man’s invention upon the rack; and one break wants a great many more to

make it good. It is like building on a false foundation, which continually stands in need of props to keep it up, and proves at last more chargeable than to have raised a substantial building at first upon a true and solid foundation: for sincerity is firm and substantial, and there is nothing hollow and unsound in it; and, because it is plain and open, fears no discovery, of which the crafty man is always in danger. All his pretences are so transparent, that he that runs may read them; he is the last man that finds himself to be found out; and while he takes it for granted that he makes fools of others, he renders himself ridiculous. Add to all this, that sincerity is the most compendious wisdom, and an excellent instrument for the speedy despatch of business. It creates confidence in those we have



to deal with, saves the labour of many inquiries, and brings things to an issue in a few words. It is like travelling in a plain beaten road, which commonly brings a man sooner to his journey than by-ways, in which men often lose themselves. In a word, whatsoever convenience may be thought to be in falsehood and dissimulation, it is soon over; but the inconvenience of it is perpetual, because it brings a man under an everlasting jealousy and suspicion, so that he is not believed when he speaks truth, nor trusted, perhaps, when he means honestly. When a man has once forfeited the reputation of his integrity, he is set fast, and nothing will serve his turn; neither truth nor falsehood."

Dr. Hawkesworth, in the "Adventurer," makes lying the subject of a whole number; and begins thus:—

“When Aristotle was once asked what a man could gain by uttering falsehoods,” he replied, “not to be credited when he shall speak the truth.” “The character of a liar is at once so hateful and contemptible, that even of those who have lost their virtue it might be expected that, from the violation of truth, they should be restrained by their pride;” and again, “almost every other vice that disgraces human nature may be kept in countenance by applause and association..... The liar, and only the liar, is invariably and universally despised, abandoned, and disowned. It is natural to expect that a crime thus generally detested should be generally avoided, &c. Yet, so it is, that, in defiance of censure and contempt, truth is frequently violated; and scarcely the most vigilant and unremitted cir-

cumspection will secure him that mixes with mankind from being hourly deceived by men of whom it can scarcely be imagined that they mean any injury to him, or profit to themselves." He then enters into a copious discussion of the lie of vanity, which he calls the most common of lies, and not the least mischievous; but I shall content myself with only one extract from the conclusion of this paper. "There is, I think, an ancient law in Scotland, by which LEASING MAKING was capitally punished. I am, indeed, far from desiring to increase in this country the number of executions; yet, I cannot but think that they who destroy the confidence of society, weaken the credit of intelligence, and interrupt the security of life, might very properly be awakened to a sense of their crimes by denunciations of a

whipping-post or pillory; since many are so insensible of right and wrong, that they have no standard of action *but the law*, nor feel *guilt* but as they dread *punishment*."

In No. 54 of the same work, Dr. Hawkesworth says, "that these men, who consider the imputation of some vices as a compliment, would resent that of a lie as an insult, for which *life* only could atone. Lying, however," he adds, "does not incur more infamy than it deserves, though other vices incur less. But," continues he, "there is equal *turpitude*, and yet greater *mean-ness*, in those forms of speech which deceive without direct falsehood. The crime is committed with greater deliberation, as it requires more contrivance; and by the offenders the use of language is totally perverted. They conceal a meaning opposite to that

which they express; their speech is a kind of riddle propounded for an evil purpose."

"Indirect lies more effectually than others destroy that mutual confidence which is said to be the band of society. They are more frequently repeated, because they are not prevented by the dread of detection. Is it not astonishing that a practice so universally infamous should not be more generally avoided? To think, is to renounce it; and, that I may fix the attention of my readers a little longer upon the subject, I shall relate a story which, perhaps, by those who have much sensibility, will not soon be forgotten."

He then proceeds to relate a story which is, I think, more full of moral teaching than any one I ever read on the subject; and so superior to the

preceding ones written by myself, that I am glad there is no necessity for me to bring them in immediate competition with it ;—and that all I need do, is to give the moral of that story. Dr. Hawkesworth calls the tale “the Fatal Effects of False Apologies and Pretences ;” but “the fatal effects of *white lying*” would have been a juster title ; and, perhaps, my readers will be of the same opinion, when I have given an extract from it. I shall preface the extract by saying that, by a series of white lies, well-intentioned, but, like all lies, mischievous in their result, either to the purity of the moral feeling, or to the interests of those who utter them, jealousy was aroused in the husband of one of the heroines, and duel and death were the consequences. The following letter, written by the too successful combatant to his wife,

will sufficiently explain all that is necessary for my purpose.

“ My dear Charlotte, I am the most wretched of all men ; but I do not upbraid you as the cause. Would that I were not more guilty than you ! We are the martyrs of dissimulation. But your dissimulation and falsehood were the effects of mine. By the success of *a lie, put into the mouth of a chairman*, I was prevented reading a letter which would at last have undeceived me ; and, by persisting in dissimulation, the Captain has made his friend a fugitive, and his wife a widow. Thus does insincerity terminate in misery and confusion, whether in its immediate purpose it succeeds, or is disappointed. If we ever meet again (to meet again in peace is impossible, but, if we ever meet again), let us resolve to be sincere ; to be *sincere* is to be *wise*,

*innocent*, and *safe*. We venture to commit faults, which shame or fear would prevent, if we did not hope to conceal them by a lie. But, in the labyrinth of falsehood, men meet those evils which they seek to avoid ;—and, as in the straight path of truth alone they can see before them, in the straight path of truth alone they can pursue felicity with success. Adieu ! I am.... dreadful!... I can subscribe nothing that does not reproach and torment me.”

Within a few weeks after the receipt of this letter, the unhappy lady heard that her husband was cast away, in his passage to France.

I shall next bring forward a greater champion of truth than the author of the *Adventurer*; and put her cause into the hands of the mighty author of the *Rambler*. Boswell, in his *Life of Dr. Johnson*, says thus :—



“ He would not allow his servant to say he was not at home when he really was.” “ A servant’s strict regard for truth,” said he, “ must be weakened by the practice. A *philosopher* may know that it is merely a *form of denial*; but few servants are such *nice distinguishers*. If I accustom a servant to tell a lie for *me*, have I not reason to apprehend that he will tell many lies for *himself*?\* ”

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\* Boswell adds, in his own person, “ I am however satisfied that every servant, of any degree of intelligence, understands saying, his master is not at home, not at all as the affirmation of a fact, but as customary words, intimating that his master wishes not to be seen; so that there can be no bad effect from it.” So says the *man of the world*; and so say almost *all* the men of the world, and women too. But, even they will admit that the opinion of Johnson is of more weight, on a question of morals, than that of *Boswell*; and I beg leave to add that of another powerful-minded and pious man. Scott, the editor of the Bible, says, in a note to the fourth chapter of Judges, “ A very criminal deviation from simplicity and godliness is become customary amongst professed christians. I mean the instructing and requiring servants

“ The importance of strict and scrupulous veracity,” says Boswell, *vol. ii, pp. 454-55*, “ cannot be too often inculcated. Johnson was known to be so rigidly attentive to it, that, even in his common conversation, the slightest circumstance was mentioned with exact precision. The knowledge of his having such a principle and habit made his friends have a perfect re-

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to *prevaricate* (to word it no more harshly), in order that their masters may be preserved from the inconvenience of unwelcome visitants. And it should be considered whether they who require their servants to disregard the truth, for their pleasure, will not teach them an evil lesson, and habituate them to use falsehood for their own pleasure also.” When I first wrote on this subject, I was not aware that writers of such eminence as those from whom I *now* quote had written respecting this *Lie of Convenience*; but it is most gratifying to me to find the truth of my humble opinion confirmed by such men as Johnson, Scott, and Chalmers.

I know not who wrote a very amusing and humorous book, called “ *Thinks I to myself* ;” but this subject is admirably treated there, and with effective ridicule, as, indeed, is worldly insincerity in general.

liance on the truth of EVERY THING THAT HE TOLD, however it might have been DOUBTED, if told by OTHERS.

“What a bribe and a reward does this anecdote hold out to us to be accurate in relation! for, of all *privileges*, that of being considered as a person on whose veracity and accuracy every one can implicitly rely, is perhaps the most valuable to a social being. *Vol. iii, p. 450.*

“Next morning, while we were at breakfast,” observes the amusing biographer, “Johnson gave a very earnest recommendation of what he himself practised with the utmost conscientiousness;” I mean, a strict regard to truth, even in the most minute particulars. “Accustom your children,” said he, “constantly to this. If a thing happened at one window, and they, when relating it, say that it hap-

pened at another, do not let it pass ; but instantly check them ; *you don't know where deviation from truth will end.* Our lively hostess, whose fancy was impatient of the rein, fidgetted at this, and ventured to say, ‘ this is too much. If Mr. Johnson should forbid me to drink tea, I would comply ; as I should feel the restraint only twice a-day ; but little variations in narrative must happen a thousand times a-day, if one is not perpetually watching.’—Johnson, ‘ Well, madam ; and you *ought* to be *perpetually watching.* It is more from *carelessness about truth,* than from *intentional lying,* that there is so much falsehood in the world.’ ”

“ Johnson inculcated upon all his friends the importance of perpetual vigilance against the slightest degree of falsehood ; the effect of which, as Sir Joshua Reynolds observed to me,

has been, that all who were of his *school* are distinguished for a love of truth and accuracy, which they would not have possessed in the same degree, if they had not been acquainted with Johnson. \*

“ We talked of the casuistical question,” says Boswell,” vol. iv, 334, “ whether it was allowable at any time to depart from truth.—Johnson. “ The general rule is, that truth should never be violated ; because it is of the utmost importance to the comfort of life that we should have a full security by mutual faith ; and occasional inconveniences should be willingly suffered, that we may preserve it. I deny,’ he observed further on, ‘ the law-

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\* However Boswell’s self-flattery might blind him, what he says relative to the harmlessness of servants denying their masters, makes him an exception to this general rule.

fulness of telling a lie to a sick man, for fear of alarming him. *You have no business with consequences ; you are to tell the truth.'*”

Leaving what the great moralist himself added on this subject, because it is not necessary for my purpose, I shall do Boswell the justice to insert the following testimony, which he himself bears to the importance of truth.

“ I cannot help thinking that there is much weight in the opinion of those who have held that truth, as an eternal and immutable principle, is never to be violated for supposed, previous, or superior obligations, of which, every man being led to judge for himself, there is great danger that we too often, from partial motives, persuade ourselves that they exist ; and, probably, whatever extraordinary instances may

sometimes occur, where some evil may be prevented by violating this noble principle, it would be found that human happiness would, *upon the whole*, be more perfect, were truth universally preserved."

But, however just are the above observations, they are inferior in pithiness, and practical power, to the following few words, extracted from another of Johnson's sentences. "All truth is not of equal importance; but, if *little violations be allowed, every violation will, in time, be thought little.*"

The following quotation is from the 96th number of the Rambler. It is the introduction to an Allegory, called Truth, Falsehood, and Fiction; but, as I think his didactic is here superior to his narrative, I shall content myself with giving the first.

"It is reported of the Persians, by

an ancient writer, that the sum of their education consisted in teaching youth to ride, to shoot with the bow, and to speak truth. The bow and the horse were easily mastered; but it would have been happy if we had been informed by what arts veracity was cultivated, and by what preservations a Persian mind was secured against the temptations to falsehood.

“There are, indeed, in the present corruptions of mankind, many incitements to forsake truth; the need of palliating our own faults, and the convenience of imposing on the ignorance or credulity of others, so frequently occur; so many immediate evils are to be avoided, and so many present gratifications obtained by craft and delusion; that very few of those who are much entangled in life, have spirit and constancy sufficient to sup-



port them in the steady practice of open veracity. In order that all men may be taught to speak truth, it is necessary that all likewise should learn to hear it ; for no species of falsehood is more frequent than flattery, to which the coward is betrayed by fear, the dependant by interest, and the friend by tenderness. Those who are neither servile nor timorous, are yet desirous to bestow pleasure ; and, while unjust demands of praise continue to be made, there will always be some whom hope, fear, or kindness, will dispose to pay them.”

There cannot be a stronger picture given of the difficulties attendant on speaking the strict truth : and I own I feel it to be a difficulty which it requires the highest of motives to enable us to overcome. Still, as the old proverb says, “ where there is a will, there

is a way ;” and if that will be derived from the only right source, the only effective motive, I am well convinced, that all obstacles to the utterance of spontaneous truth would at length vanish, and that falsehood would become as rare as it is contemptible and pernicious.

The contemporary of Johnson and Hawkesworth, Lord Kames, comes next on my list of moral writers, who have treated on the subject of truth : but I am not able to give more than a short extract from his *Sketches of the History of Man* ; a work which had no small reputation in its day, and was in every one’s hand, till eclipsed by the depth and brilliancy of more modern Scotch philosophers.

He says, p. 169, in his 7th section, with respect to veracity in particular, “ man is so constituted, that he must

be indebted to information for the knowledge of most things that benefit or hurt him ; and if he could not depend on information, society would be very little benefitted. Further, it is wisely ordered, that we should be bound by the moral sense to speak truth, even where we perceive no harm in transgressing that duty, *because it is sufficient that harm may come, though not foreseen ; at the same time, falsehood always does mischief.* It may happen not to injure us externally in our reputation, or our goods ; but it never fails to injure us internally ; the sweetest and most refined pleasure of society is a candid intercourse of sentiments, of opinions, of desires and wishes ; and it would be poisonous to indulge any falsehood in such an intercourse."

My next extracts are from two cele-

brated divines of the Church of England, Bishop Beveridge, and Archdeacon Paley. The Bishop, in his “Private Thoughts,” thus heads one of his sections (which he denominates resolutions ;—)

RESOLUTION III.—*I am resolved, by the grace of God, always to make my tongue and heart go together, so as never to speak with the one, what I do not think in the other.*

“As my happiness consisteth in nearness and vicinity, so doth my holiness in likeness and conformity to the chiefest good. I am so much the better, as I am the liker the best; and so much the holier, as I am more conformable to the holiest, or rather to him who is holiness itself. Now, one great title which the Most High is pleased to give himself, and by which, he is pleased to reveal himself to us,

is the God of truth: so that I shall be so much the liker to the God of Truth, by how much I am the more constant to the truth of God. And, the farther I deviate from this, the nearer I approach to the nature of the devil, who is the father of lies, and liars too; John viii. 44. And therefore to avoid the scandal and reproach, as well as the dangerous malignity of this damnable sin, I am resolved, by the blessing of God, always to tune my tongue an unison to my heart, so as never to speak any thing, but what I think really to be true. So that, if ever I speak not what is not true, it shall not be the error of my will, but of my understanding.

“ I know, lies are commonly distinguished into officious, pernicious, and jocose: and some may fancy some of them *more tolerable than others*. But,

for my own part, I think they are *all* pernicious; and therefore, not to be jested withal, nor indulged, *upon any pretence or colour whatsoever*. Not as if it was a sin, not to speak exactly as a thing is in itself, or as it seems to me in its literal meaning, without some liberty granted to rhetorical tropes and figures; [for, so the Scripture itself would be chargeable with lies; many things being contained in it, which are not true in a literal sense.] But, I must so use *rhetorical*, as not to abuse my *Christian*, liberty; and therefore, never to make use of hyperboles, ironies, or other tropes and figures, to deceive or impose upon my auditors, but only for the better adorning, illustrating, or confirming the matter.

“ I am resolved never to promise any thing with my mouth, but what I in-

tend to perform in my heart; and never to intend to perform any thing, but what I am sure I can perform. For, though I may intend to do as I say now, yet there are a thousand weighty things may intervene, which may turn the balance of my intentions, or otherwise hinder the performance of my promise.”

I come now to an extract from Dr. Paley, the justly celebrated author of the work entitled “Moral Philosophy.”

“A lie is a breach of promise: for whosoever seriously addresses his discourse to another, tacitly promises to speak the truth, because he knows that the truth is expected. Or the obligation of veracity may be made out from the direct ill consequences of lying to social happiness; which consequences consist, either in some specific injury to particular individu-

als, or in the destruction of that confidence which is essential to the intercourse of human life : for which latter reason, a lie may be pernicious in its general tendency ; and, therefore, criminal, though it produce no particular or visible mischief to any one. There are falsehoods which are not lies ; that is, which are not criminal, as where no one is deceived ; which is the case in parables, fables, jests, tales to create mirth, ludicrous embellishments of a story, where the declared design of the speaker is not to inform, but to divert ; *compliments in the subscription of a letter ; a servant's denying his master ; a prisoner's pleading not guilty ; an advocate asserting the justice, or his belief in the justice, of his client's cause. In such instances, no confidence is destroyed, because none was reposed ; no promise to speak the truth is violated,*



*because none was given, or understood to be given.*

“ In the first place, it is almost impossible to pronounce beforehand with certainty, concerning any lie, that it is inoffensive, *volat irrevocabile*, and collects oftentimes reactions in its flight, which entirely change its nature. It may owe possibly its mischief to the officiousness or misrepresentation of those who circulate it; but the mischief is, nevertheless, in some degree chargeable upon the original editor. In the next place, this liberty in conversation defeats its own end. Much of the pleasure, and all the benefit, of conversation depend upon our opinion of the speaker's veracity, for which this rule leaves no foundation. The faith, indeed, of a hearer must be extremely perplexed, who considers the speaker, or believes that the speaker

considers himself, as under no obligation to *adhere to truth*, but according to the *particular importance of what he relates*. But, beside, and above both these reasons, *white lies* always introduce others of a darker complexion. I have seldom known any one who deserted *truth in trifles* that could *be trusted in matters of importance*.\*

“Nice distinctions are out of the question upon occasions which, like those of speech, return every hour. The habit, therefore, when once formed, is easily extended to serve the designs of malice or interest; like all habits, it spreads indeed of itself.

“As there may be falsehoods which are not lies, so there may be lies without literal or direct falsehood. An

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\* How contrary is the spirit of this wise observation, and the following ones, to that which Paley manifests in his toleration of servants being taught to deny their masters!

opening is always left for this species of prevarication, when the literal and grammatical signification of a sentence is different from the popular and customary meaning. It is the wilful deceit that makes the lie; and we wilfully deceive when our expressions are not true in the sense in which we believe the hearer apprehends them. Besides, it is absurd to contend for any sense of words, in opposition to usage, and upon nothing else;—or a man may *act* a lie,—as by pointing his finger in a wrong direction, when a traveller inquires of him his road;—or when a tradesman shuts up his windows, to induce his creditors to believe that he is abroad: for, to all moral purposes, and therefore as to veracity, speech and action are the same;—speech being only a mode of action.

Or lastly, there may be lies of omis-

sion. A writer on English history, who, in his account of the reign of Charles the first, should wilfully suppress any evidence of that Prince's despotic measures and designs, might be said to lie ; for, by entitling his book a History of England, he engages to relate the whole truth of the history, or, at least, all he knows of it."

I feel entire unity of sentiment with Paley on all that he has advanced in these extracts, except in those passages which are printed in *Italic* ; but Chalmers and Scott have given a complete refutation to his opinion on the innocence of a servant's denying his master, in the extracts given in a *preceding* chapter ; and it will be as ably refuted in some succeeding extracts. But, eloquent and convincing as Paley generally is, it is not from his Moral Philosophy that he derives his

purest reputation, He has long been considered as lax, negligent, and inconclusive, on many points, as a moral philosopher.

It was when he came forward as a christian warrior against infidelity, that he brought his best powers into the field; and his name will live for ever as the author of *Evidences of Christianity*, and the *Horæ Paulinæ*.\*

I shall now avail myself of the assistance of a powerful and eloquent writer of a more modern date, William Godwin, with whom I have entire correspondence of opinion on the subject of spontaneous truth, though, on some other subjects, I decidedly differ

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\* I heard the venerable Bishop of ——— say that when he gave Dr. Paley some very valuable preferment, he addressed him thus: “I give you this, Dr Paley, not for your Moral Philosophy, nor for your Natural Theology, but for your *Evidences of Christianity*, and your *Horæ Paulinæ*.”

from him. “It was further proposed, says he, “to consider the value of truth in a practical view, as it relates to the incidents and commerce of ordinary life, under which form it is known by the denomination of sincerity.

“The powerful recommendations attendant on sincerity are obvious. It is intimately connected with the general dissemination of *innocence*, energy, intellectual improvement, and philanthropy. Did every man impose this law upon himself; did he regard himself as not authorized to conceal any part of his character and conduct; this circumstance alone would prevent millions of actions from being perpetrated, in which we are now induced to engage, by the prospect of success and impunity.” “There is a further benefit that would result to me from the habit of telling every man the

truth, regardless of the dictates of worldly prudence and custom ;—I should acquire a clear, ingenuous, and unembarrassed air. According to the established modes of society, whenever I have a circumstance to state which would require some effort of mind and discrimination, to enable me to do it justice, and state it with proper effect, I fly from the task, and take refuge in silence and equivocation.”

“ But the principle which forbade me concealment would keep my mind for ever awake, and for ever warm. I should always be obliged to exert my attention, lest, in pretending to tell the truth, I should tell it in so imperfect and mangled a way, as to produce the effect of falsehood. If I spoke to a man of my own faults, or those of his neighbour, I should be

anxious not to suffer them to come distorted or exaggerated to his mind, or permit what at first was fact, to degenerate into *satire*. If I spoke to him of the errors he had himself committed, I should carefully avoid those inconsiderate expressions which might convert what was in itself beneficent, into offence, and my thoughts would be full of that kindness and generous concern for his welfare which such a task necessarily brings with it. The effects of sincerity upon others would be similar to its effects on him that practised it. Plain dealing, truth spoken with kindness, but spoken with sincerity, is the most wholesome of all disciplines. . . . .” “The only species of sincerity which can, in any degree, prove satisfactory to the enlightened moralist and politician, is that where frankness is perfect, and



every degree of reserve is discarded."

"Nor is there any danger that such a character should degenerate into ruggedness and brutality.

"Sincerity, upon the principles on which it is here recommended, is practised from a consciousness *of its utility*, and from sentiments of philanthropy.

"It will communicate frankness to the voice, fervour to the gesture, and kindness to the heart.

"The duty of sincerity is one of those general principles which reflection and experience have enjoined upon us as conducive to the happiness of mankind."

"Sincerity and plain dealing are eminently conducive to the interests of mankind at large, because they afford that ground of confidence and reasonable expectation which are essential to wisdom and virtue."

I feel it difficult to forbear giving further extracts from this very interesting and well-argued part of the work from which I quote ; but the limits necessary for my own book forbid me to indulge myself in copious quotations from this. I must however, give two further extracts from the conclusion of this chapter. “ No man can be eminently either respectable, or amiable, or useful, who is not distinguished for the frankness and candour of his manners. . . . . He that is not conspicuously sincere, either very little partakes of the passion of doing good, or is pitiably ignorant of the means by which the objects of true benevolence are to be effected.” The writer proceeds to discuss the mode of *excluding visitors*, and it is done in so powerful a manner, that I must avail myself of the aid which it affords me.

“Let us then, according to the well-known axiom of MORALITY, put ourselves in the place of the man upon whom is imposed this ungracious task. Is there any of us that would be contented to perform it in person, and to say that our father and brother was not at home, when they were really in the house? Should we not feel ourselves contaminated by the PLEBEIAN LIE? Can we thus be justified in requiring that from another which we should shrink from as an act of dishonour in ourselves?” I must here beg leave to state that, generally speaking, masters and mistresses only command their servants to tell a lie which they would be very willing *to tell themselves*. I have heard wives deny their husbands, husbands their wives, children their parents, and parents their children, with as much unblushing

effrontery as if there were no such thing as truth, or its obligations ; but I respect his question on this subject, envy him his ignorance, and admire his epithet PLEBEIAN LIE.

But then, I think that *all* lies are plebeian. Was it not a king of France, a captive in this kingdom, who said, (with an honourable consciousness, that a sovereign is entitled to set a high example to his people,) if honour be driven from every other spot, it should always inhabit the breast of kings?" and if truth be banished from every other description of persons, it ought more especially to be found on the lips of those whom rank and fortune have placed above the reach of strong temptation to falsehood.

But, while I think that, however exalted be the rank of the person who utters a lie, that person suffers by his

deceit a worse than plebeian degradation, I also assert, that the humblest plebeian, who is known to be incapable of falsehood, and to utter, on all occasions, spontaneous truth, is raised far above the mendacious patrician in the scale of real respectability; and in comparison, the plebeian becomes patrician, and the patrician plebeian.

I shall conclude my references, with extracts from two modern Scotch philosophers of considerable and deserved reputation, Dr. Reid, and Dr. Thomas Browne.

“ Without fidelity and trust, there can be no human society. There never was a society even of savages,

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\* This latter gentleman, with whom I had the pleasure of being personally acquainted, has, by his early death, left a chasm in the world of literature, and in the domestic circle in which he moved, which cannot easily be filled up.

may, even of robbers and pirates, in which there was not a great degree of veracity and fidelity amongst themselves. Every man thinks himself injured and ill-used when he is imposed upon. Every man takes it as a reproach when falsehood is imputed to him. There are the clearest evidences that all men disapprove of falsehood, when their judgment is not biassed.” —*Reid's Essays on the Power of the Human Mind*, chap. vi, “On the Nature of a Contract.”

“The next duty of which we have to treat, is that of veracity, which relates to the knowledge or belief of others, as capable of being affected by the meanings, true or false, which our words or our conduct may convey; and consists in the faithful conformity of our language, or of our conduct, when it is intended tacitly to supply

the place of language to the truth which we profess to deliver ; or, at least, to that which is at the time believed by us to be true. So much of the happiness of social life is derived from the use of language, and so profitless would the mere power of language be, but for the truth which dictates it, that the abuse of the confidence which is placed in our declarations may not merely be in the highest degree injurious to the individual deceived, but would tend, if general, to throw back the whole race of mankind into that barbarism from which they have emerged, and ascended through still purer air, and still brighter sunshine, to that noble height which they have reached. It is not wonderful, therefore, that veracity, so important to the happiness of all, and yet subject to so many temptations of personal in-

terest in the violation of it, should, in all nations, have had a high place assigned to it among the virtues.”—*Dr. Thomas Browne’s Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, vol. iv, p. 225.

It may be asked why I have taken the trouble to quote from so many authors, in order to prove what no one ever doubted ; namely, the importance and necessity of speaking the truth, and the meanness and mischief of uttering falsehood. But I have added authority to authority, in order renewedly to force on the attention of my *readers* that not one of these writers mentions any allowed *exception* to the general rule, that truth is always to be spoken ; no *mental reservation* is pointed out as permitted on *special occasions* ; no individual is authorized to be the judge of right or wrong in



his own case, and to set his own opinion of the propriety and necessity of lying, in particular instances, against the positive precept to abstain from lying ; an injunction which is so commonly enforced in the page of the moralist, that it becomes a sort of imperative command. Still, in spite of the universally-acknowledged conviction of mankind, that truth is virtue, and falsehood vice, I scarcely know an individual who does not occasionally shrink from acting up to his conviction on this point, and is not, at times, irresistibly impelled to qualify that conviction, by saying, that on “ALMOST all occasions the truth is to be spoken, and never to be withheld.” Or they may, perhaps, quote the well-known proverb, that “truth is not to be spoken at all times.” But the *real* meaning of that proverb ap-

pears to me to be simply this: that we are never *officiously* or *gratuitously* to utter offensive truths ; not that truth, when required, is ever to be *withheld*. The principle of truth is an immutable principle, or it is of no use as a guard, nor safe as the foundation of morals. A moral law on which it is dangerous to act to the uttermost, is, however admirable, no better than Harlequin's horse, which was the very best and finest of all horses, and worthy of the admiration of the whole world ; but, unfortunately, the horse was DEAD ; and if the law, to tell the truth inviolably, is not to be strictly adhered to, without any regard to consequences, it is, however admirable, as useless as the merits of Harlequin's dead horse. King Theodoric, when advised by his courtiers to debase the coin, declared, “ that nothing which bore his image

should ever lie.” Happy would it be for the interests of society, if, having as much proper self-respect as this good monarch had, we could resolve never to allow our looks or words to bear any impress, but that of the *strict truth*; and were as reluctant to give a false impression of ourselves, in any way, as to circulate light sovereigns and forged banknotes. Oh! that the day may come when it shall be thought as dishonourable to commit the slightest breach of veracity, as to pass counterfeit shillings; and when both shall be deemed equally detrimental to the safety and prosperity of the community.

I intend in a future work to make some observations on several *collateral descendants* from the large family of lies. Such as INACCURACY IN RELATION; PROMISE-BREAKING; ENGAGE-

MENT BREAKING, and WANT OF PUNCTUALITY. Perhaps PROCRASTINATION comes in a degree under the head of lying; at least procrastinators lie to themselves; they say "I will do so and so to-morrow," and as they believe their own assertions, they are guilty of self-deception, the most dangerous of all deceptions. But those who are enabled by constant watchfulness never to deceive others, will at last learn never to deceive *themselves*; for truth being their constant aim in all their dealings, they will not shrink from that most effective of all means to acquire it, SELF-EXAMINATION.

## CHAP. XV.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE EXTRACTS FROM HAWKES-  
WORTH AND OTHERS.

IN the preceding chapter, I have given various extracts from authors who have written on the subject of truth, and borne their testimony to the necessity of a strict adherence to it on all occasions, if individuals wish not only to be safe and respectable themselves, but to establish the interests of society on a sure foundation ; but, before I proceed to other comments on this important subject, I shall make observations on some of the above-mentioned extracts.

Dr Hawkesworth says, “ that the liar, and only the liar, is universally despised, abandoned, and disowned.” But is this the fact? Inconvenient, dangerous, and disagreeable, though it be, to associate with those on whose veracity we cannot depend; yet which of us has ever known himself, or others, refuse intercourse with persons who habitually violate the truth? We dismiss the servant indeed, whose habit of lying offends us, and we cease to employ the menial, or the tradesman; but when did we ever hesitate to associate with the liar of rank and opulence? When was our moral sense so delicate as to make us refuse to eat of the costly food, and reject the favour or services of any one, because the lips of the obliger were stained with falsehood, and the conversation with guile? *Surely*, this writer overrates

the delicacy of moral feeling in society, or we, of these latter days, have fearfully degenerated from our ancestors.

He also says, “that the imputation of a lie, is an insult for which life only can atone.” And amongst men of worldly honour, duel is undoubtedly the result of the lie given, and received. Consequently, the interests of truth are placed under the secure guardianship of fear on great occasions. But, it is not so on daily, and more common ones, and the man who would thus fatally resent the imputation of falsehood, does not even reprove the lie of convenience in his wife or children, nor refrain from being guilty of it himself; he will often, perhaps, be the bearer of a lie to excuse them from keeping a disagreeable engagement; and will not scruple to make lying

apologies for some negligence of his own. But, is Dr Hawkesworth right in saying that offenders like *these* are shunned and despised? Certainly not; nor are they even *self-reprobated*, nor would they be censured by others, if their falsehood were detected. Yet, are they not liars? and is the lie, imputed to them, (in resentment of which imputation they were willing to risk their life, and the life of another,) a greater breach of the *moral law*, than the little lies which they are so willing to tell? and who, that is known to tell lies on trivial occasions, has a right to resent the imputation of lying on great ones? Whatever flattering unction we may lay to our souls, there is only one wrong and one right; and I repeat, that, as those servants who pilfer grocery only are with justice called thieves, because they have



thereby shown that the principle of honesty is not in them,—so may the utterers of little lies be with justice called liars, because they equally shew that they are strangers to the restraining and immutable principle of truth.

Hawkesworth says, “ that indirect lies more effectually destroy mutual confidence, that band of society, than any others;” and I fully agree with him in his idea of the “ great turpitude, and greater meanness, of those forms of speech, which deceive without direct falsehood;” but, I cannot agree with him, that these deviations from truth are “ *universally infamous*;” on the contrary, they are even scarcely reckoned a fault at all; their very frequency prevents them from being censured, and they are often considered both necessary and justifiable.

In that touching and useful tale by which Hawkesworth illustrates the pernicious effect of *indirect*, as well as direct, lies, “ a lie, put into the mouth of a chairman, and another lie, accompanied by WITHHOLDING OF THE WHOLE TRUTH, are the occasion of duel and of death.”

And what were these lies, direct and indirect, active and passive ? Simply these. The bearer of a note is desired to *say* that he comes from a *milliner*, when, in reality, he comes from a lady in the neighbourhood ; and one of the principal actors in the story leaves word that he is gone to a coffee-house, when, in point of fact, he is gone to a friend’s house. That friend, on being questioned by him, *withholds*, or conceals part of the truth, meaning to *deceive* ; the wife of the questioner *does the same* ; and thus,

though both are innocent even in thought, of any thing offensive to the strictest propriety, they become involved in the fatal consequences of imputed guilt, from which a disclosure of the whole truth would at once have preserved them.

Now, I would ask if there be any thing *more common* in the daily affairs of life, than those *very lies* and dissimulations which I have selected ?

Who has not given, or heard given, this order, “do not say where you come from ;” and often accompanied by “if you are asked, say you do not know, or you come from *such* a place.” Who does not frequently conceal where they have been ; and while they own to the questioner that they have been to such a place, and seen such a person, *keep back* the information that they *have been to another*

place, and seen *another person*, though they are very conscious that the two latter were the *real* objects of the *inquiry* made?

Some may reply “yes; I do these things every day perhaps, and so does every one; and where is the harm of it? You cannot be so absurd as to believe that such innocent lies, and a concealment such as I have a *right* to indulge in, will certainly be visited by consequences like those imagined by a writer of fiction?”

I answer, no; but though I cannot be *sure* that *fatal* consequences will be the result of that IMPOSSIBLE thing, an INNOCENT LIE, some consequences attend on *all* deviations from truth, which it were better to avoid. In the first place, the lying order given to a servant, or *inferior*, not only lowers the standard of truth in the mind of the

person so commanded, but it *lowers* the person who GIVES it; it weakens that *salutary respect* with which the lower orders regard the higher; servants and inferiors are shrewd observers; and those domestics who detect a laxity of morals in their employers, and find that they do not hold truth sacred, but are ready to teach others to lie for their service, deprive themselves of their best claim to respect and obedience from them, that of a deep conviction of their MORAL SUPERIORITY. And they who discover in their intimate friends and associates a systematic habit, an assumed and exercised right of telling only as *much of the truth as suits their inclinations and purposes*, must feel their confidence in them most painfully destroyed, and listen in future to their disclosures and communica-

tions with unavoidable suspicion, and degrading distrust.

The account given by Boswell of the regard paid by Dr. Johnson to truth on all occasions, furnishes us with a still better shield against deviations from it, than can be afforded even by the best and most *moral fiction*. For, as Longinus was said “to be himself the great sublime he draws,” so Johnson was himself the great example of the benefit of those precepts which he lays down for the edification of others ; and what is still more useful and valuable to us, he proves that however difficult it may be to speak the truth, and to be accurate on all occasions, it is certainly *possible* ; for, as Johnson could do it, why cannot others ? It requires not his force of intellect to enable us to follow his example ; all that is ne-

cessary is a knowledge of right and wrong, a reverence for truth, and an abhorrence of deceit.

Such was Johnson's *known* habit of telling the truth, that even improbable things were believed, if *he* narrated them! Such was the respect for truth which his practice of it excited, and such the beneficial influence of his example, that all his intimate companions "were distinguished for a love of truth and an accuracy" *derived* from association with him.

I can never read this account of our great moralist, without feeling my heart glow with EMULATION and TRIUMPH! With emulation, because I know that it must be my own fault, if I become not as habitually the votary of truth as he himself was; and with triumph, because it is a complete refutation of the commonplace argu-

ments against enforcing the necessity of spontaneous truth, that it is *absolutely impossible*; and that, if *possible*, what would be gained by it?

What would be gained by it? Society at large would, in the end, gain a degree of safety and purity far beyond what it has hitherto known; and, in the mean while, the individuals who speak truth would obtain a prize worthy the highest aspirings of earthly ambition,—the constant and involuntary confidence and reverence of their fellow-creatures.

The consciousness of truth and ingenuousness gives a radiance to the countenance, a freedom to the play of the lips, a persuasion to the voice, and a graceful dignity to the person, which no other quality of mind can equally bestow. And who is not able to recollect the direct contrast to this picture



exhibited by the conscious utterer of falsehood and disingenuousness? Who has not observed the downcast eye, the snapping, restless eyelid, the changing colour, and the hoarse, impeded voice, which sometimes contradict what the hesitating lip utters, and stamp, on the positive assertion, the undoubted evidence of deceit and insincerity?

Those who make up the usual mass of society are, when tempted to its common dissimulations, like little boats on the ocean, which are continually forced to shift sail, and row away from danger; or, if obliged to await it, are necessitated, from want of power, to get on one side of the billow, instead of directly meeting it. While the firm votaries of truth, when exposed to the temptations of falsehood, proceed undaunted along the direct course, like the majestic ves-

sel, coming boldly and directly on, breasting the waves in conscious security, and inspiring confidence in all whose well-being is intrusted to them. Is it not a delightful sensation to feel and to inspire confidence? Is it not delightful to know when we lie down at night, that, however darkness may envelope us, the sun will undoubtedly rise again, and chase away the gloom? True, he may rise in clouds, and his usual splendour may not shine out upon us during the whole diurnal revolution; still, we know that, though there be not sunshine, there will be light, and we betake ourselves to our couch, confiding in the assurances of past experience, that day will succeed to night, and light to darkness. But, is it not equally delightful to feel this cheering confidence in the moral system of

the circle in which we move? And can any thing inspire it so much as the constant habit of truth in those with whom we live? To know, that we have friends on whom we can always rely for honest counsel, ingenuous reproof, and sincere sympathy; to whom we can look with never-doubting confidence in the night of our soul's dependency, knowing that they will rise on us like the cheering never-failing light of day, speaking unwelcome truths perhaps, but speaking them with tenderness and discretion; is, surely, one of the dearest comforts which this world can give. It is the most precious of the earthly staffs, permitted to support us as we go, trembling, short-sighted, and weary pilgrims, along the chequered path of human existence.

And is it not an ambition worthy of

thinking and responsible beings to endeavour to qualify ourselves, and those whom we love, to *be* such friends as these? And if habits of unblemished truth will bestow this qualification, were it not wise to labour hard in order to attain them, undaunted by difficulty, undeterred by the sneers of worldlings, who cannot believe in the possibility of that moral excellence which they feel themselves unable to obtain?

To you, O ye parents and preceptors, I particularly address myself! Guard your own lips from “speaking leasing,” that the quickly discerning child or servant, may not, in self-defence, set the force of your example against that of your precepts. If each individual family would seriously resolve to avoid every species of falsehood themselves, whether authorized

by custom or not, and would visit every deviation from truth in those accused, with punishment and disgrace, the example would unceasingly spread ; for, even now, wherever the beauty of truth is seen, its influence is immediately felt, and its value acknowledged. Individual efforts, however humble, if firm and repeated, must be ultimately successful, as the feeble mouse in the fable, was, at last, enabled, by its perseverance, to gnaw the cords asunder which held the mighty lion. Difficult, I own, would such general purification be ; but what is impossible to zeal and enterprise ?

Hercules, as fabulous but instructive story tells us, when he was required to perform the apparently impossible task of cleansing the Augean stables, exerted all his strength, and turned the course of a river through

them to effect his purpose, proving by his success, that nothing is impossible to perseverance and exertion; and however long the duration, and wide-spreading the pollutions of falsehood and dissimulation in the world, there *is* a river, which, if suffered to flow over their impurities, is powerful enough to wash away every stain, since it flows from the “**FOUNTAIN OF EVER-LIVING WATERS.**”

## CHAP. XVI.

## RELIGION THE ONLY BASIS OF TRUTH.

ALL the moralists from whom I have quoted, and those on whom I have commented in the preceding chapters, have treated the subject of truth, as moralists only. They do not lay it down as an indisputable fact, that truth, as a principle of action, is obligatory on us all, in enjoined obedience to the clear dictates of revealed religion. Therefore, they have kept out of sight the strongest motive to abhor lying, and cleave unto truth, OBEDIENCE TO THE DIVINE WILL; yet, as

necessary as were the shield and the buckler to the ancient warriors, is the “breastplate of faith” to the cause of spontaneous truth. It has been asserted that morality might exist in all its power and purity, were there no such thing as religion, since it is conducive to the earthly interests and happiness of man. But, are moral motives sufficient to protect us in times of particular temptations? There appears to me the same difference between morality, unprotected by religious motives, and morality derived from them, as between the palace of ice, famous in Russian story, and a castle built of ever-during stone; perfect to the eye, and, as if formed to last for ever, was the building of frost-work, ornamented and lighted up for the pleasure of the sovereign; but, it melted away before the power of natural and artificial



warmth, and was quickly resolved into the element from which it sprung. But the castle formed of stones joined together by a strong and enduring cement, is proof against all assailment; and, even though it may be occasionally shattered by enemies, it still towers in its grandeur, indestructible, though impaired. In like manner, unassailable and perfect, in appearance, may be the virtue of the mere moralist; but, when assailed by the warmth of the passions on the one side, and by different enemies on the other, his virtue, like the palace of ice, is likely to melt away, and be as though it had not been. But, the virtue of the truly religious man, even though it may on occasion be slightly shaken, is yet proof against any important injury; and remains, spite of temptation and danger, in its original purity and pow-

er. The moral man *may*, therefore, utter spontaneous truth; but the *religious* man *must*: for he remembers the following precepts which amongst others he has learned from the scriptures; and knows that to speak lies is displeasing to the GOD OF TRUTH.

In the 6th chapter of Leviticus, the Lord threatens the man “Who lies to his neighbour, and who deceives his neighbour.” Again he says, “Ye shall not deal falsely, neither lie to one another.” We read in the Psalms that “the Lord will destroy those who speak leasing.” He is said to be angry with the wicked every day, who have conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. “He that worketh deceit,” says the Psalmist, “shall not dwell within my house—he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.” The Saviour, in the 8th

chapter of John calls the devil “a liar, and the father of lies.” Paul, in the 3rd chapter of Colossians says, “Lie not one to another!” Prov. vi. 19, “The Lord hates a false witness that speaketh lies.” Prov. ix, “And he that speaketh lies shall perish.” Prov. xix. 22, “A poor man is better than a liar.” James iii. 14, “Lie not against the truth.” Isaiah xvii, “The Lord shall sweep away the refuge of lies.” Prov. xviii, “Let the lying lips be put to silence.” Psalm cxix. 29, “Remove from me the way of lying.” Ps. lxiii. 11, “The mouth that speaketh lies shall be stopped.” The fate of Gehazi, in the 5th chapter of the second book of Kings, who lied to the prophet Elisha, and went out of his presence “a leper whiter than snow;” and the judgment on Ananias and Sapphira, in the 5th chapter of Acts,

on the former for WITHHOLDING THE TRUTH INTENDING TO DECEIVE, and on the latter for telling a DIRECT LIE, are awful proofs how hateful falsehood is in the sight of the Almighty ; and, that though the season of his immediate judgments may be past, his vengeance against every species of falsehood is tremendously certain.

But, though as I have stated more than once, all persons, even those who are most negligent of truth, exclaim continually against lying ; and liars cannot forgive the slightest imputation against their veracity, still, few are willing to admit that telling lies of courtesy, or convenience, is lying ; or that the occasional violator of truth, for what are called innocent purposes, ought to be considered as a liar ; and *thence* the universal falsehood which prevails. And, surely,

that moral precept which every one claims a right to violate, according to his wants and wishes, loses its restraining power, and is, as I have before observed, for all its original purposes, wholly annihilated.

But, as that person has no right to resent being called a sloven who goes about in a stained garment, though that stain be a single one; so that being who allows himself to indulge in any one species of lie, cannot declare with justice that he deserves not the name of a liar. The general voice and tenor of Scripture say “lie not at all.”

This may appear a command very difficult to obey, but he who gave it, has given us a still more appalling one; “be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect.” Yet, surely, he would never have given a command

impossible for us to fulfil. However, be that as it may, we are to try to fulfil it. The drawing-master who would form a pupil to excellence, does not set incorrect copies before him, but the most perfect models of immortal art; and that tyro who is awed into doing nothing by the perfection of his model, is not more weak than those who persevere in the practice of lying by the seeming *impossibility* of constantly telling the truth. The pupil may never be able to copy the model set before him, because his aids are only human and earthly ones. But,

He who has said that “as our day our strength shall be;” He whose ear is open to the softest cry; He whom the royal psalmist called upon to deliver him from those “whose mouth speaketh vanity, and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood.”—This

pure, this powerful, this perfect Being, still lives to listen to the supplications of all who trust *in him* ; and will, in the hour of temptation to utter falsehood and deceit, strengthen them out of Zion.

In all other times of danger the believer supplicates the Lord to grant him force to resist temptation ; but, who ever thinks of supplicating him to be enabled to resist daily temptation to what is called little, or *white lying*? Yet, has the Lord revealed to us what species of lying he tolerates, and what he reproves? Does he tell us that we may tell the lie of courtesy and convenience, but avoid all others? The lying of Ananias was only the passive lie of concealing that he had kept back part of *his own property*, yet he was punished with instant death ! The only safety is in believing, or re-

membering, that all lying and insincerity whatever is rebellion against the revealed will of the great God of Truth ; and they who so believe, or remember, are prepared for the strongest attacks of the soul's adversary, " that devil, who is the father of lies ;" for their weapons are derived from the armoury of heaven ; their steps are guided by light from the sanctuary, and the cleansing river by which they are enabled to drive away all the pollutions of falsehood and deceit, is that pure river of " the water of life, flowing from the throne of God, and of the Lamb."

I trust that I have not in any of the preceding pages underrated the difficulty of always speaking the truth ;— I have only *denied* that it was *impossible* to do so, and I have pointed out the only means by which the possi-



bility of resisting the temptation to utter falsehood might be secured to us on all occasions; namely, religious motives derived from obedience to the will of God.

Still, in order to prove how well aware I am of the difficulty in question, I shall venture to bring forward some distinguished instances on record of holy men, who were led by the fear of death and other motives to lie against their consciences; thereby exhibiting beyond a doubt, the difficulty of a constant adherence to the practice of sincerity. But they also prove that the real Christian must be miserable under a consciousness of having violated the truth, and that to escape from the most poignant of all pangs, the pang of self-reproach, the delinquents in question sought for refuge from their remorse, by courting

that very death which they had endeavoured to escape from by being guilty of falsehood. They at the same time furnish convincing proofs that it is in the power of the sincere penitent to retrace his steps, and be reinstated in that height of virtue whence he has fallen, if he will humble himself before the great Being whom he has offended, and call upon Him who can alone save to the uttermost."

My three first examples are taken from the martyred reformers, who were guilty of the most awful species of lying, in signing recantations of their opinions, even when their belief in them remained unchanged; but who, as I have before observed, were compelled by the power of that word of God written on the depth of the secret heart, to repent with agonizing bitterness of their apostacy from truth,

and to make a public reparation for their short-lived error, by a death of patient suffering, and even of rejoicing.

JEROME OF PRAGUE comes first upon the list. He was born at the close of the thirteenth century; and in the year 1415, after having spent his youth in the pursuit of knowledge at the greatest Universities in Europe, namely, those of Prague, Paris, Heidelberg, and Cologne, we find him visiting Oxford, at which place he became acquainted with the works of Wickliffe; and at his return to Prague he not only professed himself an open favourer of the doctrines of that celebrated reformer; but, finding that John Huss was at the head of Wickliffe's party in Bohemia, he attached himself immediately to that powerful leader. It were unnecessary for me to follow him through the whole of his polem-

ical career, as it is the close of it only which is fitted for my purpose ; suffice, that having been brought before the Council of Constance, in the year 1415, to answer for what they deemed his heresies, a thousand voices called out, even after his first examination, “ away with him ! burn him ! burn him ! burn him ! ” On which, little doubting that his power and virtuous resistance could ever fail him in time of need, Jerome replied, looking round on the assembly with dignity and confidence, “ Since nothing can satisfy you but my blood, God’s will be done ! ”

Severities of a most uncommon nature were now inflicted on him, in order to constrain him to recant a point of which the council were excessively desirous. So rigorous was his confinement, that at length it brought upon him a dangerous illness, in the course

of which he entreated to have a confessor sent to him; but he was given to understand, that only on certain terms would this indulgence be granted; notwithstanding, he remained immoveable. The next attempt on his faithfulness was after the martyrdom of Huss; when all its affecting and appalling details were made known to him, he listened, however, without emotion, and answered in language so resolute and determined, that they had certainly no hope of his *sudden* conversion. But, whether, too confident in his own strength, he neglected to seek, as he had hitherto done, that only strength “which cometh from above,” it is certain that his constancy at length gave way. “He withstood,” says Gilpin, in his *Lives of the Reformers*, “the simple fear of death; but imprisonment, chains, hunger, sick-

ness, and torture, through a succession of months, was more than human nature could bear; and though he still made a noble stand for the truth, when brought three times before the infuriated council, he began at last to waver, and to talk obscurely of his having misunderstood the tendency of some of the writings of Huss. Promises and threats were now redoubled upon him, till, at last, he read aloud an ample recantation of all the opinions that he had recently entertained, and declared himself in every article a firm believer with the church of Rome."

But with a heavy heart he retired from the council; chains were removed from his body, but his mind was corroded by the chains of his conscience, and his soul was burthened with a load, till then unknown to it. Hither-

to, the light of an approving conscience had cheered the gloom of his dungeon, but now all was dark to him both without and within.

But in this night of his moral despair, the day-spring from on high was again permitted to visit him, and the penitent was once more enabled to seek assistance from his God. Jerome had long been apprized that he was to be brought to a second trial, upon some new evidence which had appeared ; and this was his only consolation in the midst of his painful penitence. At length, the moment so ardently desired by him arrived ; and, rejoicing at an opportunity of publicly retracting his errors, and deploing his unworthy falsehood, he eagerly obeyed the summons to appear before the council in the year 1416. There, after delivering an ora-

tion, which was, it is said, a model of pathetic eloquence, he ended, by declaring before the whole assembly, “that though the fear of death, and the prevalence of human infirmity, had induced him to retract those opinions with his lips which had drawn on him the anger and vengeance of the council, yet they were *then* and *still* the opinions near and dear to his heart, and that he solemnly declared they were opinions in which he alone believed, and for which he was ready, and even glad, to die.” “It was expected,” says Poggé the Florentine, who was present at his examination, “that he would have retracted his errors ; or, at least, have apologized for them ; but he plainly declared that he had nothing to retract.” After launching forth into the most eloquent encomiums on Huss, declaring him to



be a wise and holy man, and lamenting his unjust and cruel death, he avowed that he had armed himself with a firm resolution to follow the steps of that blessed martyr, and suffer with constancy whatever the malice of his enemies should inflict; and he was mercifully enabled to keep his resolution.

When brought to the stake, and when the wood was beginning to blaze, he sang a hymn, which he continued with great fervency, till the fury of the fire scorching him, he was heard to cry out, “O Lord God! have mercy on me!” and a little afterwards, “thou knowest,” he cried, “how I have loved thy truth;” and he continued to exhibit a spectacle of intense suffering, made bearable by as intense devotion, till the vital spark was in mercy permitted to expire; and

the contrite, but then triumphant spirit, was allowed to return unto the God who gave it.

THOMAS BILNEY, the next on my list, “was brought up from a child (says Fox, in his Acts and Monuments) in the University of Cambridge, profiting in all kind of liberal sciences even unto the profession of both laws. But, at the last, having gotten a better schoolmaster, even the Holy Spirit of Christ enduing his heart by privie inspiration with the knowledge of better and more wholesome things, he came unto this point, that forsaking the knowledge of man’s lawes he converted his studie to those things which tended more unto godlinesse, than gainfulnessse. At the last, Bilney forsaking the universitie, went into many places teaching and preaching, being associate with Thomas Arthur, which

accompanied him from the universitie. The authoritie of Thomas Wolsey, Cardinall of York, at that time was greate in England, but his temper and pride much greater, which did evidently declare unto all wise men the manifest vanitie, not only of his life, but also of all the Bishops and clergie; whereupon, Bilney, with other good men, marvelling at the incredible insolence of the clergie, which they could no longer suffer or abide, began to shake and reprove this excessive pompe, and also to pluck at the authority of the Bishop of Rome."

It therefore became necessary that the Cardinal should rouse himself and look about him. A chapter being held at Westminster for the occasion, Thomas Bilney, with his friends, Thomas Arthur and Hugh Latimer, were brought before them. Gilpin says,

“That, as Bilney was considered as the Heresiarch, the rigour of the court was chiefly levelled against him. The principal persons at this time concerned in Ecclesiastical affaires besides Cardinal Woolsey, were Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Tunstal, Bishop of London.” The latter was of all the prelates of these times the most deservedly esteemed, “as he was not influenced by the spirit of popery; and had just notions of the mild genius of Christianity;” but, every deposition against Bilney was enlarged upon with such unrelenting bitterness, that Tunstall, though the president of the court, despaired of being able to soften by his influence the enraged proceedings of his colleagues. And, when the process came to an end, “Bilney, declaring himself what they called an obstinate heretic, was found guilty.”

Tunstall now proved the kindness of his heart. He could not come forward in Bilney's favour by a judicial interference, but he laboured to save him by all means in his power. "He first set his friends upon him to persuade him to recant, and when that would not do, he joined his entreaties to theirs; had patience with him day after day, and begged he would not oblige him, contrary to his inclinations, to treat him with severity."

The man whom fear was not able to move, was not proof against the language of affectionate persuasion. "Bilney could not withstand the winning rhetoric of Tunstall, though he withstood the menaces of Warham." He therefore recanted, bore a fagot on his shoulders in the Cathedral church of Paul, bareheaded, according to the custom of the times, and

was dismissed with Latimer and the others who had met with milder treatment and easier terms."

The liberated heretics, as they were called, returned directly to Cambridge, where they were received with open arms by their friends ; but in the midst of this joy, Bilney kept aloof, bearing on his countenance the marks of internal suffering and incessant gloom. " He received the congratulations of his officious friends with confusion and blushes ;" he had sinned against his God, therefore he could neither be gratified nor cheered by the affection of any earthly being. In short, his mind at length preying on itself, nearly disturbed his reason, and his friends dared not allow him to be left alone either night or day. They tried to comfort him ; but they tried in vain ; and when they endeavoured to sooth

him by certain texts in Scripture, "it was as though a man would run him through with a sword." In the agonies of his despair he uttered pathetic and eager accusations of his friends, of Tunstall, and, above all, of himself. At length, his violence having had its course, it subsided, by degrees, into a state of profound melancholy. In this state he continued from the year 1629 to 1631, "reading much, avoiding company; and, in all respects, preserving the severity of an ascetic."

It is interesting to observe in how many different ways our soul's adversary deals with us, in order to allure us to perdition; and he is never so successful as when he can make the proffered sin assume the appearance of what is amiable. This seems to have been the case with the self-judged Bilney. To the fear of death, and the me-

naces of Warham, we are told that he opposed a resolution and an integrity which could not be overcome; but the gentle entreaties of affection, and the tender, persuasive eloquence of Tunstall, had power to conquer his love of truth, and make the pleadings of conscience vain; while he probably looked upon his yielding as a proof of affectionate gratitude, and that, not to consider the feelings of those who loved him, would have been offensive, and ungrateful hardness of heart.

But, whatever were his motives to sin, that sin was indeed visited with remorse as unquestionable as it was efficacious; and it is pleasant to turn from the contemplation of Bilney's frailty, to that of its exemplary and courted expiation.

The consequences of this salutary period of sorrow and seclusion was,



that after having, for some time, thrown out hints that he was meditating an extraordinary design; after saying that he was almost prepared, that he would shortly go up to Jerusalem, and that God must be glorified in him; and keeping his friends in painful suspense by this mysterious language, he told them at last that he was fully determined to expiate his late shameful abjuration, that *wicked lie* against his conscience, by death.

There can be no doubt but that his friends again interposed to shake his resolution; but that Being who had lent a gracious ear to the cry of his penitence and his agony, “girded up his loins for the fight,” and enabled him to sacrifice every human affection at the foot of the cross, and strengthened him to take up that cross, and bear it, unfainting, to the end. He

therefore broke from all his Cambridge ties, and set out for Norfolk, the place of his nativity, and which, for that reason, he chose to make the place of his death.

When he arrived there, he preached openly in the fields, confessing his fault, and preaching publicly that doctrine which he had before abjured, to be the VERY TRUTH, and willed all men to beware by him, and never to trust to their *fleshly friends in causes of religion*; and so setting forward in his journey toward the celestial Jerusalem, he departed from thence to the Anchiessie in Norwich, (whom he had converted to Christ) and there gave her a New Testament of Tindall's translation, and the obedience of a christian-man; whereupon he was apprehended, and carried to prison.

Nixe, (the blind Bishop Nixe, as

Fox calls him) the then Bishop of Norwich, was a man of a fierce, inquisitorial spirit, and he lost no time in sending up for a writ to burn him.

In the mean while, great pains were taken by divers religious persons to re-convert him to what his assailants believed to be the truth; but he having “planted himselfe upon the firm rocke of God’s word, was at a point, and so continued to the end.”

While Bilney lay in the county gaol, awaiting the arrival of the writ for his execution, he entirely recovered from that melancholy which had so long oppressed him; and, “like an honest man who had long lived under a difficult debt, he began to resume his spirits when he thought himself in a situation to discharge it.”—*Gilpin’s Lives of the Reformers*, p. 358.

“Some of his friends found him taking a hearty supper the night before his execution, and expressing their surprise, he told them he was but doing what they had daily examples of in common life ; he was only keeping his cottage in repair while he continued to inhabit it.” The same composure ran through his whole behaviour, and his conversation was more agreeable that evening than they had ever remembered it to be.

Some of his friends put him in mind “that though the fire which he should suffer the next day should be of great heat unto his body, yet the comfort of God’s Spirit should coole it to his everlasting refreshing.” At this word the said Thomas Bilney putting his hand toward the flame of the candle burning before them, (as he also did divers times besides,) and feeling the

heat thereof, “ Oh !” said he, “ I feel by experience, and have knowne it long by philosophie, that fire by God’s ordinance is naturally hot, but yet I am persuaded, by God’s holy word, and by the experience of some spoken of in the same, that in the flame they felt no heate, and in the fire they felt no consumption: and I constantly believe that, howsoever the stubble of this my bodie shall be wasted by it, yet my soule and spirit shall be purged thereby; a paine for the time, whereon, notwithstanding, followeth joy unspeakable.” He then dwelt much upon a passage in Isaiah. “ Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, and called thee by thy name. Thou art mine own; when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; when thou walkest in the fire, it shall not burn thee, and the flame shall not kindle upon

thee; for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel.”

“ He was led to the place of execution without the citie gate, called

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\* “ In the Lollard's pit, I find that many persons of a sect, known by the name of Lollards, in the city of Norwich, were thrown, after being burnt, in the year 1424, and for many years afterwards; and thence it was called the *Lollard's pit*: and the following account of the meaning of the term Lollard may not be unacceptable. Soon after the commencement of the 14th century, the famous sect of the Cellite brethren and sisters arose at Antwerp: they were also styled the Alexian brethren and sisters, because St. Alexius was their patron; and they were named Cellites, from the cells in which they were accustomed to live. As the clergy of this age took little care of the sick and the dying, and deserted such as were infected with those pestilential disorders which were then very frequent, some compassionate and pious persons at Antwerp formed themselves into a society for the performance of those religious offices which the sacerdotal orders so shamefully neglected. In the prosecution of this agreement, they visited and comforted the sick, assisted the dying with their prayers and exhortations, took care of the interment of those who were cut off by the plague, and on that account forsaken by the terrified clergy, and committed them to the grave with a *solemn funeral dirge*. It was with reference to this

Bishop's-gate, in a low valley, commonly called the Lollard's pit,\* under Saint Leonard's hill." At the coming forth of the said Thomas Bilney out

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last office that the common people gave them the name of *Lollards*. The term Lollhard, or Lullhard, or, as the ancient Germans wrote it, Lollert, Lullert, is compounded of the old German word lullen, lollan, lallen, and the well-known termination of hard, with which many of the old High Dutch words end. Lollen, or Lullen, signifies to sing with a low voice. It is yet used in the same sense among the English, who say *lulla sleep*, which signifies to sing any one into a slumber with a sweet indistinct voice.

"Lollhard, therefore, is a singer, or one who frequently sings. For, as the word *beggen*, which universally signifies to request any thing fervently, is applied to devotional requests, or prayers, so the word *lollen* or *lallen* is transferred from a common to a sacred song, and signifies, in its most limited sense, to sing a hymn. Lollhard, therefore, in the vulgar tongue of the ancient Germans, denotes a person who is continually praising God with a song, or singing hymns to his honour.

"And as prayers and hymns are regarded as an external sign of piety towards God, those who were more frequently employed in singing hymns of praise to God than others, were, in the common popular language, called Lollhards."

of the prison doore, one of his friends came to him, and with few words as he durst, spake to him, and prayed him, in God's behalf, to be constant, and to take his death as patiently as he could. Whereunto the said Bilney answered with a quiet and mild countenance, "ye see when the mariner is entered his ship to saile on the troublous sea, how he is for a while tossed

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"But the priests, and monks, being inveterately exasperated against these good men, endeavoured to persuade the people that, innocent and beneficent as the Lollards appeared to be, they were tainted with the most pernicious sentiments of a religious kind, and secretly addicted to all sorts of vices; hence, the name of Lollard at length became infamous. Thus, by degrees, it came to pass, that any person who covered heresies, or crimes, under the appearance of piety, was called a Lollard, so that this was not a name to denote any one particular sect, but was formerly common to all persons, and all sects, who were supposed to be guilty of impiety towards God, and the church, under an external profession of extraordinary piety."—*Maclane's Eccles. History*, p. 355—56.



in the billows of the same, but yet in hope that he shall come to the quiet haven, he beareth in better comfort the perils which he feeleth; so am I now toward this sayling; and whatsoever stormes I shall feele, yet shortly after shall my ship be in the haven, as I doubt not thereof, by the grace of God, desiring you to helpe me with your prayers to the same effect."

While he kneeled upon a little ledge coming out of the stake, upon which he was afterwards to stand, that he might be better seen, he made his private prayers with such earnest elevation of his eyes and hands to heaven, "and in so good quiet behaviour, that he seemed not much to consider the terror of his death," ending his prayer with the 43d psalm, in which he repeated this verse thrice, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O

Lord! for in thy sight shall no man living be justified ;” and so finishing the psalm, he concluded. “Nor did that God in whom he trusted forsake him in the hour of his need; while the flames raged around him, he held up his hands and knocked upon his breast, crying “Jesus,” and sometimes “Credo,” till he gave up the ghost, and his bodie being withered, bowed downward upon the chaine,” while, triumphing over death, (to use the words of the poet laureate) “he rendered up his soul in the fulness of faith, and entered into his reward.”

“So exemplary,” says Bloomfield, in his *History of Norwich*, “was Biliney’s life and conversation, that when Nix, his persecutor, was constantly told how holy and upright he was, he said, he feared that he had burnt *Abel*.”

I have recently visited the Lollard’s

pit; that spot where my interesting martyred countryman met his dreadful death. The top of the hill retains, probably, much the same appearance as it had when he perished at its foot; and, without any great exertion of fancy, it would have been easy for me to figure to myself the rest of the scene, could I have derived sufficient comfort from the remembrance of the fortitude with which he bore his sufferings, to reconcile me to the contemplation of them. Still, it is, I believe, salutary to visit the places hallowed in the memory, as marked by any exhibition of virtuous acts and sufferings endured for the sake of conscience. To the scaffold, and to the stake, on account of their religious opinions, it is humbly to be hoped that Christians will never again be brought. But all persecution, on the score of reli-

gion, is, in a degree, an infliction of martyrdom on the mind and on the heart. It matters not that we forbear to kill the body of the Christian, if we afflict the soul by aught of a persecuting spirit.

Yet does not our daily experience testify, that there is nothing which calls forth petty persecutions, and the mean warfare of a detracting spirit, so much as any marked religious profession.

And while such a profession is assailed, by ridicule on the one hand, by distrust of its motives on the other; while it exposes the serious Christian, converted from the errors of former days, to the stigma of wild enthusiasm, or of religious hypocrisy; who shall say that the persecuting spirit of the Lauds and the Bonners is not still the spirit of the world? Who shall say

to the tried and shrinking souls of those who, on account of their having made a religious profession, are thus calumniated, and thus judged, The time of martyrdom is over, and we live in mild, and liberal, and truly Christian days ?

Such were the thoughts uppermost in my mind, while I stood, perhaps, on the very spot where Bilney suffered, and where Bilney died; and though I rejoiced to see that the harmless employment of the lime-burner had succeeded to the frightful burning of the human form, I could not but sigh as I turned away, while I remembered that so much of an intolerant, uncandid spirit still prevailed amongst professed Christians, and, that the practice of persecution still existed, though applied in a very different manner. I could not but think, that many of the present generation,

might do well to visit scenes thus fraught with the recollection of martyrdom. If it be true that "our love of freedom would burn brighter on the plains of Marathon," and that our devotion "must glow more warmly amidst the ruins of Iona," sure am I that the places where the martyrs for conscience' sake have passed through the portals of fire and agony to their God, must assist in bestowing on us power to endure with fortitude the mental martyrdom which may, unexpectedly, become our portion in life; and, by recalling the sufferings of others, we may, meekly bowing to the hand that afflicts us for our good, be, in time, enabled to bear, and even to love, our own.

The last, and third, on my list, is THOMAS CRANMER, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was promoted to that

See by the favour of Henry the Eighth, and degraded from it in consequence of his heretical opinions, by virtue of an order from the sovereign pontiff, in the reign of Queen Mary. “The ceremony of his degradation,” says Gilpin, which took place at Oxford, “was performed by Thirlby, Bishop of Ely, a man recently converted, it should seem, to catholicism; who, in Cranmer’s better days, had been honoured with his particular friendship, and owed him many obligations.

As this man, therefore, had long been so much attached to the Archbishop, it was thought proper by his new friends that he should give an extraordinary test of his zeal; for this reason the ceremony of the degradation was committed to him. He had undertaken, however, too hard a task. The mild benevolence of the primate,

which shone forth with great dignity, though he stood in the mock dignity of canvas robes, struck the old apostate to the heart. All the past came throbbing to his breast, and a few repentant tears began to trickle down the furrows of his aged cheek. The Archbishop gently exhorted him not to suffer his private to overpower his public affections. At length, one by one, the canvas trappings were taken off, amidst the taunts and exultations of Bonner, bishop of London, who was present at the ceremony.

Thus degraded, he was attired in a plain freize gown, the common habit of a yeoman at that period, and had what was then called a townsman's cap put upon his head. In this garb he was carried back to prison, Bonner crying after him, "He is now no longer my Lord! he is now no longer



my Lord!" *Gilpin's Lives of the Reformers.*

I know not what were Cranmer's feelings at these expressions of mean exultation from the contemptible Bonner; but, I trust that he treated them, and the ceremony of his degradation at the time, with the indifference which they merited. Perhaps, too, he might utter within himself, this serious and important truth, that none of us can ever be truly *degraded*, but by *ourselves alone*; and this moment of his external humiliation was, in the eyes of all whose esteem was worth having, one of triumph and honour to the bereaved ecclesiastick. But what, alas! were those which succeeded to it? That period, and that alone, was the period of his real degradation, when, overcome by the flatteries and the kindness of his real and seeming friends, and subdued

by the entertainments given him, the amusements offered him, and, allowed to indulge in the “lust of the eye, and the pride of life,” he was induced to lend a willing ear to the proposal of being reinstated in his former dignity, on condition that he would conform to the present change of religion, and “gratify the queen by being wholly a catholick!”

The adversary of man lured Cranmer, as well as Bilney, by the unsuspected influence of mild and amiable feelings, rather than the instigations of fear; and he who was armed to resist, to the utmost, the rage and malice of his enemies, was drawn aside from truth and duty by the suggestions of false friends.

After the confinement of a full year in the gloomy walls of a prison, his sudden return into social inter-

course dissipated his firm resolves. That love of life returned, which he had hitherto conquered ; and when a paper was offered to him, importing his assent to the tenets of popery, his better resolutions gave way, and in an evil hour he signed the fatal scroll !

Cranmer's recantation was received by the popish party with joy beyond expression ; but, as all they wanted was to blast the reputation of a man, whose talents, learning, and virtue, were of such great importance to the cause which he espoused, they had no sooner gained what they desired, than their thirst for his blood returned, and though he was kept in ignorance of the fate which awaited him, a warrant was ordered for his execution with all possible expedition.

But long before the certainty of his approaching fate was made known to

him, the self-convicted culprit sighed for the joy and the serenity which usually attend the last days of a martyr for the truth which he loves.

Vainly did his friends throw over his faults the balm afforded by those healing words, “the spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak.” In his own clear judgment he was fully convicted, while his days were passed in horror and remorse, and his nights in sleepless anguish.

To persevere in his recantation was an insupportable thought; but, to retract it was scarcely within the verge of possibility; but he was allowed an opportunity of doing so which he never expected to have, and though death was the means of it, he felt thankful that it was afforded him, and deemed his life a sacrifice not to be regarded for the attainment of such an object.

When Dr. Cole, one of the heads of the popish party, came to him on the twentieth of March, the evening preceding his intended execution, and insinuated to him his approaching fate, he spent the remaining part of the evening in drawing up a full confession of his apostacy, and of his bitter repentance, wishing to take the best opportunity to speak or publish it, which he supposed would be afforded him when he was carried to the stake; but, beyond his expectation, a better was provided for him. It was intended that he should be conveyed immediately from his prison to the place of his execution, where a sermon was to be preached; but, as the morning of the appointed day was wet and stormy, the ceremony was performed under cover.

About nine o'clock, the Lord Wil-

liams of Thame, attended by the magistrates of Oxford, received him at the prison gate, and conveyed him to St. Mary's church, where he found a crowded audience awaiting him, and was conducted to an elevated place, in public view, opposite to the pulpit. If ever there was a broken and a contrite heart before God and man; if ever there was a person humbled in the very depths of his soul, from the consciousness of having committed sin, and of having deserved the extreme of earthly shame and earthly suffering; that man was Cranmer!

He is represented as standing against a pillar, pale as the stone against which he leaned. "It is doleful," says a popish, but impartial, spectator, "to describe his behaviour during the sermon, part of which was addressed to him; his sorrowful countenance; his

heavy cheer, his face bedewed with tears; sometimes lifting up his eyes to heaven in hope; sometimes casting them down to the earth for shame. To be brief, he was an image of sorrow. The dolour of his heart burst out continually from his eyes in gushes of tears: yet he retained ever a quiet and grave behaviour, which increased pity in men's hearts, who unfeignedly loved him, *hoping it had been his repentance for his transgressions.*" And so it was; though not for what many considered his transgressions; but it was the deep contrition of a converted heart, and of a subdued and penitent soul, prepared by the depth of human degradation and humility, to rise on the wings of angels, and meet in another world its beloved and blessed Redeemer.

✱ The preacher having concluded his

sermon, turned round to the audience, and desired all who were present to join with him in silent prayers for the unhappy man before them. A solemn stillness ensued; every eye and heart were instantly lifted up to heaven. Some minutes having been passed in this affecting manner, the degraded primate, who had also fallen on his knees, arose in all the dignity of sorrow, accompanied by conscious penitence and Christian reliance, and thus addressed his audience. “I had myself intended to desire your prayers. My desires have been anticipated, and I return you all that a dying man can give, my sincerest thanks. To your prayers for me, let me add my own! Good Christian people!” continued he, “my dearly beloved brethren and sisters in Christ, I beseech you most heartily, to pray for me to Almighty



God, that he will forgive me all my sins and offences, which are many, without number, and great beyond measure. But one thing grieveth my conscience more than all the rest; whereof, God willing, I mean to speak hereafter. But how great and how many soever my sinnes be, I beseech you to pray God, of his mercy, to pardon and forgive them all." He then knelt down and offered up a prayer as full of pathos as of eloquence; then he took a paper from his bosom, and read it aloud, which was to the following effect.

"It is now, my brethren, no time to dissemble—I stand upon the verge of life—a vast eternity before me—what my fears are, or what my hopes, it matters not here to unfold. For one action of my life, at least, I am accountable to the world. My

*late shameful subscription to opinions, which are wholly opposite to my real sentiments.* Before this congregation I solemnly declare, that the fear of death alone induced me to this ignominious action—that it hath cost me many bitter tears—that in my heart I totally reject the Pope, and doctrines of the church of Rome, and that”—

As he was continuing his speech, the whole assembly was in an uproar. “Stop the audacious heretic,” cried Lord Williams of Thame. On which several priests and friars, rushing from different parts of the church, seized, or pulled him from his seat, dragged him into the street, and, with indecent precipitation, hurried him to the stake, which was already prepared.

As he stood with all the horrid apparatus of death around him,

amidst taunts, revilings, and execrations, he alone maintained a dispassionate behaviour. Having discharged his conscience, he seemed to feel, even in his awful circumstances, an inward satisfaction, to which he had long been a stranger. His countenance was not fixed, as before, in sorrow on the ground; but he looked round him with eyes full of sweetness and benignity, as if at peace with all the world."

Who can contemplate the conduct of Cranmer, in the affecting scene that followed, without feeling a deep conviction of the intensity of his penitence for the degrading lie, of which he had been guilty! and who can fail to think that Cranmer, in his proudest days, when the favourite, the friend, the counsellor of a king, and bearing the highest ecclesiastical rank in the coun-

try, was far inferior in real dignity and real consequence to Cranmer, when, prostrate in soul before his offended, yet pardoning God, but erect and fearless before his vindictive enemies, he thrust the hand, with which he had signed the lying scroll of his recantations, into the fast-rising flames, crying out, as he did so, “this hand hath offended! this hand hath offended!”

It is soothing to reflect, that his sufferings were quickly over; for, as the fire rose fiercely round him, he was involved in a thick smoke, and it was supposed that he died very soon.

“Surely,” says the writer before quoted, “his death grieved every one: his friends sorrowed for love; his enemies for pity; and strangers through humanity.”

To us of these latter days, his crime and his penitence afford an awful

warning, and an instructive example.

The former proves how vain are talents, learning, and even exalted virtues, to preserve us in the path of rectitude, unless we are watchful unto prayer, and unless, wisely distrustful of our own strength, we wholly and confidently lean upon "that rock, which is higher than we are." And the manner in which he was enabled to declare his penitence and contrition for his falsehood and apostacy, and to bear the tortures which attended on his dying hours, is a soothing and comforting evidence, that sinners, who prostrate themselves with contrite hearts before the throne of their God, and their Redeemer, "he will in no wise be cast out," but will know his Almighty arm to be round about them, "till death is swallowed up in victory."

It is with a degree of fearfulness and

awe, that I take my fourth example from one who, relying too much on his own human strength, in his hour of human trial, was permitted to fall into the commission of human frailty, and to utter the most decided and ungrateful of falsehoods; since he who thus erred was no less a person than the apostle Peter himself, who, by a thrice-told lie, denied his Lord and Master; but who, by his bitter tearful repentance, and by his subsequent faithfulness unto death, redeemed, in the eyes both of his Saviour and of men, his short-lived frailty, and proved himself worthy of that marked confidence in his active zeal, which was manifested by our great Redeemer, in his parting words.

The character of Peter affords us a warning, as well as an example, while the affectionate reproofs of the Savi-

our, together with the tender encouragement, and generous praise, which he bestowed upon him, prove to us, in a manner the most cheering and indisputable, how merciful are the dealings of the Almighty with his sinful creatures; how ready he is to overlook our offences, and to dwell with complacency on our virtues; and that “he willeth not the death of a sinner, but had rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live.”

Self-confidence, and self-righteousness, proceeding perhaps from his belief in the superior depth and strength of his faith in Christ, seem to have been the besetting sins of Peter; and that his faith was lively and sincere, is sufficiently evidenced by his unhesitating reply to the questions of his Lord: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!” A reply so satis-

factory to the great Being whom he addressed, that he answered him, saying, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven: and I say unto thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

It seems as if Peter became, from this assurance, so confident in his own strength, that he neglected to follow his master's injunction, “Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation;” and therefore became an easy victim to the first temptation which beset him: for soon after, with surprising confidence in his own wisdom, we find him rebuking his Lord, and asserting, that the things which he prophecied concerning himself should not happen unto him.



On which occasion, the Saviour says, addressing the adversary of Peter's soul, then powerful within him, "Get thee behind me, Satan! thou art an offence to me!" His want of implicit faith on this occasion was the more remarkable, because he had *just before* uttered that strong avowal of his confidence in Christ, to which I have already alluded.

In an early part of the history of the Gospel we read that Peter, beholding the miraculous draught of fishes, fell on his knees, and exclaimed, in the fulness of surprise and admiration, and in the depth of conscious sinfulness and humility, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

On a subsequent occasion, ever eager as he was to give assurances of what he believed to be his undoubting faith, we find him saying to the

Saviour, when he had removed the terrour of his disciples at seeing him walking on the sea, by those cheering words, “It is I, be not afraid!”—“Lord! if it be thou, bid me come to thee on the water!”—“And he walked on the water to come to Jesus; but, when he saw the wind boisterous, he *was again afraid*, and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, “Lord, save me!” Immediately, Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him, saying unto him, “O thou of *little faith*, wherefore didst thou *doubt*?” The first of these facts shews the great sensibility of his nature, and his exemplary aptitude to acknowledge and admire every proof of the power and goodness of his Redeemer: and the second is a further corroborating instance of his eager confidence in his own courage and belief, followed by its accus-

tomed falling off in the hour of trial.

His unsubmitted and self-confident spirit shews itself again in his declaration, that Christ should not wash his feet; as if he still set his human wisdom against that of the Redeemer, till, subdued by the Saviour's reply, he exclaims, "Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."

The next instance of the mixed character of Peter, and of the solicitude which it excited in our Saviour, is exhibited by the following address to him, "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold! Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, (added the gracious Jesus,) that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Peter replied, in the fulness of self-confidence, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee into prison,

and unto death !” And he said, “ I tell thee, Peter, that before the cock crows, thou shalt deny me thrice.” It does not appear what visible effect this humiliating prophecy had on him to whom it was addressed, though Matthew says that he replied, “ though I should die with thee, still I will not deny thee ; but it is probable that, by drawing his sword openly in his defence, when they came out “ with swords and with staves to take him,” he hoped to convince his Lord of his fidelity. But this action was little better than one of mere physical courage, the result of sudden excitement at the time ; and was consistent with that want of moral courage, that most difficult courage of *all*, which led him, when the feelings of the moment had subsided, to deny his master, and to utter the degrading *lie of fear*. After he

had thus sinned, the Lord turned and looked upon Peter; and Peter remembered the words of the Lord, how he had said unto him, “ Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.”

It seems as if that self-confidence, that blind trusting in one's own strength, that tendency which we all have to believe, like Hazael, that we can never fall into certain sins, and yield to certain temptations, was conquered, for a while, in the humbled, self-judged, and penitent apostle. Perhaps the look of mild reproach which the Saviour gave him was long present to his view, and that, in moments of subsequent danger to his truth, those eyes seemed again to admonish him, and those holy lips to utter the salutary and saving precept, “ watch

and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

Nevertheless, rendered too confident, probably, in his own unassisted strength, we find him sinning once more in the same way; namely, from *fear of man*; for, being convinced that the Mosaic law was no longer binding on the conscience, he ate and drank freely at Antioch with the Gentiles; but, when certain Jewish converts were sent to him from the apostle James, he separated from the Gentiles, lest he should incur the censure of the Jews; being thus guilty of a sort of *practical lie*, and setting those Jews, as it proved, a most pernicious example of dissimulation; for which dissingenuous conduct, the apostle Paul publicly and justly reproved him before the whole Church. But, as there is no record of any reply given by

Peter, it is probable that he bore the rebuke meekly; humbled, no doubt, in spirit, before the great Being whom he had again offended; and not only does it seem likely that he met this publick humiliation with silent and Christian forbearance, but, in his last Epistle, he speaks of Paul, “as his beloved brother,” generously bearing his powerful testimony to the wisdom contained in his Epistles, and warning the hearers of Paul against rejecting aught in them which, from want of learning, they may not understand, and “therefore wrest them, as the unlearned and unstable do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.”

The closing scene of this most interesting apostle's life, we have had no means of contemplating, though the Saviour's last affecting and pathetic address to him, in which he prophecies

that he will die a martyr in his cause, makes one particularly desirous to procure details of it.

“ So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, “ Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?” He saith unto him, “ Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.” He saith unto him, “ Feed my lambs!” He saith unto him again the second time, “ Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?” He saith unto him, “ Yea, Lord ! thou knowest that I love thee.” He saith unto him, “ Feed my sheep!” He saith unto him the third time, “ Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?” Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? and he said unto him, “ Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.” Jesus saith unto him, “ Feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when



thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God; and when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, follow me!"

"The case of Peter, " says the pious and learned Scott, in his Notes to the Gospel of John, " required a more particular address than that of the other apostles, in order that both he and others might derive the greater benefit from his fall and his recovery. Our Lord, therefore, asked him by his original name, as if he had forfeited that of PETER by his instability, whether he loved him more than these. The latter clause might be interpreted of his employment and gains as a

fisherman, and be considered as a demand whether he loved Jesus above his secular interests; but Peter's answer determines us to another interpretation. He had, before his fall, in effect, said that he loved his Lord more than the other disciples did; for he had boasted that, though all men should forsake him, yet would not he. Jesus now asked him whether he would stand to this, and aver that he loved him more than the others did. To this he answered modestly by saying, "thou knowest that I love thee," without professing to love him more than others. Our Lord, therefore, renewed his appointment to the ministerial and apostolical office; at the same time commanding him to feed his lambs, or his *little lambs*, even the least of them; for the word is diminutive: this intimated to him that his late ex-

perience of his own weakness ought to render him peculiarly condescending, complaisant, tender, and attentive to the meanest and feeblest believers. As Peter had *thrice* denied Christ, so he was pleased to repeat the same question a third time: this grieved Peter, as it reminded him that he had given sufficient cause for being thus repeatedly questioned concerning the sincerity of his love to his Lord. Conscious, however, of his integrity, he more solemnly appealed to Christ, as knowing all things, even the secrets of his heart, that he knew he loved him with cordial affection, notwithstanding the inconsistency of his late behaviour. Our Lord thus tacitly allowed the truth of this profession, and renewed his charge to him to feed his sheep."

"Peter," continues the commenta-

tor, “ had earnestly professed his readiness to die with Christ, yet had shamefully failed when put to the trial; but our Lord next assured him that he would at length be called on to perform that engagement, and signified the death by which he would, as a martyr for his truth, glorify God.” No doubt that this information, however awful, was gratefully received by the devoted, ardent, though, at times, the unstable follower of his beloved Master; as it proved the Saviour’s confidence in him, notwithstanding all his errors.

There was, indeed, an energy of character in Peter, which fitted him to be an apostle and a martyr. He was the questioning, the observing, the conversing, disciple. The others were probably withheld by timidity from talking with their Lord, and put-

ting frequent questions to him; but Peter was the willing spokesman on all occasions; and to him we owe that impressive lesson afforded us by the Saviour's reply, when asked by him how often he was to forgive an offending brother, "I say not unto thee until seven times, but unto seventy times seven."

But, whether we contemplate Peter as an example, or as a warning, in the early part of his religious career, it is cheering and instructive, indeed, to acquaint ourselves with him in his writings, when he approached the painful and awful close of it. When, having been enabled to fight a good fight, in fulfilment of his blessed Lord's prayer, that "his faith might not fail;" and having been "converted himself," and having strengthened his brethren, he addressed his last awfully impres-

sive Epistles to his Christian brethren, before he himself was summoned to that awful trial, after which he was to receive the end of “his faith,” even “the salvation of his soul!” Who can read, without trembling awe, his eloquent description of the day of judgment; “that day,” which, as he says, “will come like a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; and the works that are therein shall be burned up,” while he adds this impressive lesson, “seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?” And who can contemplate, without affectionate admiration, the *undoubting*, but *unfearing*, certainty with which he speaks of his approach-

ing death, as foretold by our Lord ; “knowing,” said he, “that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ has shewed us?”

Soon after he had thus written, it is probable that he repaired to the expected scene of his suffering, and met his doom—met it, undoubtedly, as became one taught by experience, to know his own recurring weakness, admonished often by the remembrance of that eye which had once beamed in mild reproof upon him ; but which, I doubt not, he beheld in the hour of his last trial and dying agonies, fixed upon him with tender encouragement and approving love ; while, in his closing ear, seemed once again to sound the welcome promised to the devoted follower of the cross, “well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

We, of these latter days, can see the founder of our religion only in the record of his word, and hear him only in his ever-enduring precepts ; but, though we hear him not externally with our ears, he still speaks in the heart of us all, if we will but listen to his purifying voice ; and though the look of his reproachful eye cannot be beheld by us only with our mental vision, still, that eye is continually over us ; and when, like the apostle, we are tempted to feel too great security in our own strength, and to neglect to implore the assistance which cometh from above, let us recal the look which Jesus gave to the offending Peter, and remember that the same eye, although unseen, is watching and regarding us still.

Oh ! could we ever lie even upon what are called trifling occasions, if



we once believed the certain, however disregarded, *truth*, that the Lord takes cognizance of every species of falsehood, and that the eye, which looked the apostle into shame and agonizing contrition, beholds our lying lips with the same indignation with which it reproved him, reminding us that “all liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone,” and that *without* the city of life is “whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.”

## CHAP. XVII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

I SHALL not give many individual instances of those whom even the fear of death has not been able to terrify into falsehood, because they were supported in their integrity by the fear of God ; but facts are on record. The history of the primitive Christians contains many examples both of men and women whom neither threats nor bribes could induce for a moment to withhold or falsify the truth, or to conceal their newly-embraced opinions, though cer-

tain that torture and death would be the consequence; *fearless* and *determined* beings, who, though their rulers, averse to punish them, would gladly have allowed their change to pass unnoticed, persisted, like the prophet Daniel, openly to display the faith that was in them, exclaiming at every interrogatory, and in the midst of tortures and of death, “ we are Christians; we are Christians!” Some martyrs of more modern days, Catholics, as well as Protestants, have borne the same unshaken testimony to what they believed to be religious truth; but Latimer, more especially, was so famous amongst the latter, not only for the pureness of his life, but for the *sincerity* and goodness of his *evangelical doctrine*; (which, since the beginning of his preaching, had, in all points, been conformable to the teach-

ing of Christ and of his apostles,) that the very adversaries of God's truth, with all their menacing words and cruel imprisonment, could not withdraw him from it. But, whatsoever he had *once preached, he valiantly defended* the same before the world, *without fear of any mortal creature*, although of never so great power and high authority; wishing and minding rather to suffer, not only loss of worldly possessions, but of life, than that the glory of God, and the truth of Christ's Gospel should in any point be obscured or defaced through him." Thus this eminent person exhibited a striking contrast to that fear of man, which is the root of all lying, and all *dissimulation*; that mean, grovelling, and pernicious fear, which every day is leading us either to disguise or withhold our real opinion; if not, to be absolutely guilty of

uttering falsehood, and which induces us, but too often, to remain silent, and ineffective, even when the oppressed and the insulted require us to speak in their defence, and when the cause of truth, and of righteousness, is injured by our silence. The early FRIENDS were exemplary instances of the power of faith to lift the Christian above all fear of man; and not only George Fox himself, but many of his humblest followers, were known to be persons “*who would rather have died than spoken a lie.*”

There was one female Friend, amongst others, of the name of Mary Dyar, who, after undergoing some persecution for the sake of her religious tenets at Boston, in America, was led to the gallows between two young men, condemned, like herself, to suffer for conscience' sake; but,

having seen them executed, she was reprieved, carried back to prison, and then, being discharged, was permitted to go to another part of the country ; but, apprehending it to be her duty to return to “ the bloody town of Boston,” she was summoned before the general court. On her appearance there, the governor, John Endicott, said, “ Are you the same Mary Dyar that was here before ?” And it seems he *was preparing an evasion for her* ; there having been another of that name returned from Old England. But she was so far from disguising the truth, that she answered undauntedly, “ I am the *same Mary Dyar that was here the last general court.*” The consequence was immediate imprisonment ; and, soon after, death.

But the following narrative, which, like the preceding one, is recorded in

Sewell's History of the people called Quakers, bears so directly on the point in question, that I am tempted to give it to my readers in all its details.

“ About the fore part of this year, if I mistake not, there happened a case at Edmond's-Bury, which I cannot well pass by in silence ; viz. a certain young woman was committed to prison for child-murder. Whilst she was in jail, 't is said, William Bennet, a prisoner for conscience' sake, came to her, and in discourse asked her whether, during the course of her life, she had not many times transgressed against her conscience ? and whether she had not often thereupon felt secret checks and inward reproofs, and been troubled in her mind because of the evil committed ; and this he did in such a convincing way, that she not only assented to what he laid before

her, but his discourse so reached her heart, that she came clearly to see, that if she had not been so stubborn and disobedient to those inward reproofs, in all probability she would not have come to such a miserable fall as she now had ; for man, not desiring the knowledge of God's ways, and departing from him, is left helpless, and cannot keep himself from evil, though it may be such as formerly he would have abhorred in the highest degree, and have said with Hazael, " what ! is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing ? " W. Bennet thus opening matters to her, did, by his wholesome admonition, so work upon her mind, that she, who never had conversed with the Quakers, and was altogether ignorant of their doctrine, now came to apprehend that it was the grace of God that brings sal-



vation, which she so often had withstood, and that this grace had not yet quite forsaken her, but now made her sensible of the greatness of her transgression. This consideration wrought so powerfully, that, from a most grievous sinner, she became a true penitent; and with hearty sorrow she cried unto the Lord, “that it might please him not to hide his countenance.” And continuing in this state of humiliation and sincere repentance, and persevering in supplication, she felt in time ease; and, giving heed to the exhortations of the said Bennet, she obtained at length to a sure hope of forgiveness by the precious blood of the immaculate Lamb, who died for the sins of the world. Of this she gave manifest proofs at her trial before Judge Matthew Hale, who, having heard how penitent she was, would

fain have spared her, having on purpose caused it to be inserted in the indictment, that she had committed the fact “ *wilfully and designedly* ;” but she being asked, according to the form, “ *guilty or not guilty* ?” readily answered, “ guilty.” This astonished the judge, who purposely had got the words “ *wilfully and designedly*” inserted in the indictment ; that from thence she might find occasion to deny the charge, and so to quash the indictment ; and therefore he told her that she seemed not duly to consider what she said, since it could not well be believed that such a one as she, who, it may be, inconsiderately had roughly handled her child, should have killed it “ *wilfully and designedly*.” Here the judge opened a backdoor for her to avoid the punishment of death. But now the fear of God had got so

much room in her heart, that no tampering would do ; no fig-leaves could serve her for a cover ; for she knew now that this would have been adding sin to sin, and to cover herself with a covering, but not of God's spirit ; and therefore she plainly signified to the court that indeed she had committed the mischievous act intendedly, thereby to hide her shame ; and that having sinned thus grievously, and being affected now with true repentance, she could by no means excuse herself, but was willing to undergo the punishment the law required ; and, therefore, she could but acknowledge herself guilty, since otherwise how could she expect forgiveness from the Lord ?" This undisguised and free confession being spoken with a serious countenance, did so affect the judge that, tears trickling down his cheeks, he sorrowfully

said, “ Woman ! such a case as this I never met with before. Perhaps you, who are but young, and speak so piously, as being struck to the heart with repentance, might yet do much good in the world ; but now you force me so that, *ex officio*, I must pronounce sentence of death against you, since you will admit of no excuse.” Standing to what she had said, the judge pronounced the sentence of death ; and when, afterward, she came to the place of execution, she made a pathetic speech to the people, exhorting the spectators, especially those of the young, “ to have the fear of God before their eyes ; to give heed to his secret reproofs for evil, and so not to grieve and resist the good of the Lord, which she herself not having timely minded, it had made her run on in evil, and thus proceeding from wicked-

ness to wickedness, it had brought her to this dismal exit. But, since she firmly trusted to God's infinite mercy, nay, surely believed her sins, though of a bloody die, to be washed off by the pure blood of Christ, she could contentedly depart this life." Thus she preached at the gallows the doctrine of the Quakers, and gave heart-melting proofs that her immortal soul was to enter into Paradise, as well as anciently that of the thief on the cross."

The preceding chapter contains three instances of martyrdom, undergone for the sake of religious truth, and attended with that animating publicity which is usual on such occasions, particularly when the sufferers are persons of a certain rank and eminence in society.

But, she who died, as narrated in the story given above, for the cause

of *spontaneous* truth, and *willingly* resigned her life, rather than be guilty of a *lie* to save it, though that lie was considered by the law of the country, and by the world at large, to be no lie at all ; this bright example of what a true and lively faith can do for us in an hour of strong temptation, was not only a humble, guilty woman, but a *nameless* one also. She was an obscure friendless individual, whose name on earth seems to be nowhere recorded ; and, probably, no strong interest was felt for her disastrous death, except by the preacher who converted her, and by the Judge who condemned her. This afflicted person was also well aware that the courage with which she met her fate, and died rather than utter a falsehood, would not be cheered and honoured by an anxious populace, or by the tearful

farewells of mourning but admiring friends; she also knew that her honest avowal would brand her with the odious guilt of murdering her child, and yet she persevered in her adherence to the truth! Therefore, I humbly trust that, however inferior she may appear, in the eyes of her fellow-mortals, to martyrs of a loftier and more important description, this willing victim of what she thought her duty, offered as acceptable a sacrifice as theirs, in the eyes of her Judge and her Redeemer.

No doubt, as I before observed, the history of both public and private life may afford many more examples of equal reverence for truth, derived from religious motives; but, as the foregoing instance was more immediately before me, I was induced to give it as an apt illustration of

the precept which I wish to enforce.

The few, and not the many, are called upon to earn the honours of public martyrdom, and to shine like stars in the firmament of distant days ; and, in like manner, few of us are exposed to the danger of *telling* great and *wicked* falsehoods. But, as it is more difficult, perhaps, to bear with fortitude the little *daily* trials of life, than great calamities, because we summon up all our spiritual and moral strength to resist the latter, but often do not feel it to be a necessary duty to bear the former with meekness and resignation ; so is it more difficult to overcome and resist temptations to every-day lying and deceit, than to falsehoods of a worse description ; since, while these little lies often steal on us unawares, and take us unprepared, we know them to be so tri-



vial, that they escape notice, and to be so *tolerated*, that even, if detected, they will not incur *reproof*. Still, I must again and again repeat the burden of my song, that *moral result*, which, however weakly I may have performed my task, I have laboured incessantly, through the whole of my work, to draw, and to illustrate; namely, that this little and tolerated lying, as well as great and reprobated falsehood, is wholly inconsistent with the character of a serious Christian, and sinful in the eyes of the God of Truth; that, in the daily recurring temptation to deceive, our only security is to lift up our soul, in secret supplication, to be preserved faithful in the hour of danger, and always to remember, without any *qualification* of the monitory words, that “lying lips are an abomination to the Lord,”

## CONCLUSION.

I SHALL now give a summary of the didactic part of these observations on lying, and the principles which, with much fearfulness and humility, I have ventured to lay down.

I have stated, that if there be no other true definition of lying than an intention to deceive, withholding the truth, with such an intention, partakes as much of the nature of falsehood as direct lies; and that, therefore, lies are of two natures, active and passive; or, in other words, direct and indirect.

That a PASSIVE LIE is equally as irreconcilable to moral principles as an active one.

That the LIES OF VANITY are of an active and passive nature; and that, though we are tempted to be guilty of the former, our temptations to the latter are stronger still.

That many, who would shrink with moral disgust from committing the latter species of falsehood, are apt to remain silent when their vanity is gratified, without any overt act of deceit on their part; and are contented to let the flattering representation remain uncontradicted.

That this disingenuous passiveness belongs to that common species of falsehood, *withholding the truth*.

That lying is a common vice, and the habit of it so insensibly acquired, that many persons violate the truth, without being conscious that it is a sin to do so, and even look on dexterity in *white lying*, as it is called, as a

thing to be proud of; but, that it were well to consider whether, if we allow ourselves liberty to lie on trivial occasions, we do not weaken our power to resist temptation to utter falsehoods which may be dangerous, in their results, to our own well-being, and that of others.

That, if we allow ourselves to violate the truth, that is, deceive for any purpose whatever, who can say where this self-indulgence will submit to be bounded?

That those who learn to resist the daily temptation to tell what are deemed trivial and innocent lies, will be better able to withstand allurements to serious and important deviations from truth.

That the LIES OF FLATTERY are, generally speaking, not only unprincipled, but offensive.

That there are few persons with whom it is so difficult to keep up the relations of peace and amity as flatterers by system and habit.

That the view taken by the flatterer of the penetration of the flattered is often erroneous. That the really intelligent are usually aware to how much praise and admiration they are entitled, be it encomium on their personal or mental qualifications.

That the LIE OF FEAR springs from the want of moral courage; and that, as this defect is by no means confined to any class or age, the result of it, that fear of man, which prompts to the lie of fear, must be universal.

That some lies, which are thought to be LIES OF BENEVOLENCE, are not so in reality, but may be resolved into lies of fear, being occasioned by a dread of losing favour by speaking the

truth, and not by real kindness of heart.

That the daily lying and deceit tolerated in society, and which are generally declared necessary to preserve good-will, and avoid offence to the self-love of others, are the result of false, not real, benevolence,—for that those who practise it the most to their acquaintances when present, are only too apt to make detracting observations on them when they are out of sight.

That true benevolence would ensure, not destroy, the existence of sincerity, as those who cultivate the benevolent affections always see the good qualities of their acquaintance in the strongest light, and throw their defects into shade; that, consequently, they need not shrink from speaking truth on all occasions. That the kind-

ness which prompts to erroneous conduct cannot long continue to bear even a remote connection with real benevolence; that *unprincipled benevolence* soon degenerates into *malevolence*.

That, if those who possess good sense would use it as zealously to remove obstacles in the way of spontaneous truth, as they do to justify themselves in the practice of falsehood, the difficulty of always speaking the truth would in time vanish.

That the LIE OF CONVENIENCE—namely, the order to servants to say, “not at home,” that is, teaching them to lie for our convenience, is, at the same time, teaching them to lie for their own, whenever the temptation offers.

That those masters and mistresses who show their domesticks, that they

do not themselves value truth, and thus render the consciences of the latter callous to its requireing, deprive themselves of all right and chance of having servants worthy of confidence, degrade their own characters also in their opinions, and incur an awful guilt by endangering their servants' well-being here, and hereafter.

That husbands who employ their wives, and wives their husbands, and that parents who employ their children to utter for them the lies of convenience, have no right to be angry, or surprised if their wedded or parental confidence be afterwards painfully abused, since they have taught their families the habit of deceit, by encouraging them in the practice of what they call *innocent white lying*.

That LIES OF INTEREST are sometimes more excusable, and less offens-



ive than others, but are 'disgusting when told by those whom conscious *independence* preserves from any strong temptation to violate truth.

That LIES OF FIRST-RATE MALIG-NITY, namely, lies intended wilfully to destroy the reputation of men and women, are less frequent than falsehoods of any other description, because the arm of the law defends reputations.

That, notwithstanding, there are many persons, worn both in body and mind by the consciousness of being the object of calumnies and suspicions which they have not the power to combat, who steal broken-hearted into their graves, thankful for the summons of death, and hoping to find refuge from the injustice of their fellow-creatures in the bosom of their Saviour.

That against LIES OF SECOND-RATE

MALIGNITY the law holds out no protection.

That they spring from the spirit of detraction, and cannot be exceeded in base and petty treachery.

That LIES OF REAL BENEVOLENCE, though the most amiable and respectable of all lies, are, notwithstanding, objectionable, and ought not to be told.

That, to deceive the sick and the dying, is a dereliction of principle which not even benevolence can excuse; since, who shall venture to assert that a deliberate and wilful falsehood is justifiable?

That, withholding the truth with regard to the character of a servant, *alias*, the passive lie of benevolence, is a pernicious and reprehensible custom; that, if benevolent to the hired, it is malevolent to the person hiring,

and may be fatal to the person so favoured.

That the masters and mistresses who thus perform what they call a benevolent action, at the expense of sincerity, often, no doubt, find their sin visited on their own heads; because, if servants know that, owing to the lax morality of their employers, their faults will not receive their proper punishment, that is, disclosure, when they are turned away,—one of the most powerful motives to behave well is removed, since, those are not likely to abstain from sin, who are sure that they shall sin with impunity.

That it would be **REAL BENEVOLENCE** to tell, and not to withhold, the whole truth on such occasions; because, as those who hire servants so erroneously befriended, may, from ignorance of their besetting sins, put

temptations in their way to repeat their fault ; and may thereby expose them to incur, some day or other, the severest penalty of the law.

That it is wrong, however benevolently meant, to conceal the whole extent of a calamity from an afflicted person, not only because it shews a distrust of the wisdom of the Deity and implies that he is not a fit judge of the proper degree of trial to be inflicted on his creatures, but, because it is a *withholding of the truth with an intention to deceive*, and that such a practice is not only wrong, but *inexpedient* ; as we may thereby stand between the sufferer and the consolation which might have been afforded in some cases by the very nature and intensity of the blow inflicted ; and lastly, because such concealment is seldom ultimately successful, since the truth

comes out, usually, in the end, and when the sufferer is not so well able to bear it.

That LIES OF WANTONNESS, are lies which are often told for no other motive than to shew the utterer's total contempt for truth ; and that there is no hope for the amendment of such persons, since they thus sin from a depraved fondness for speaking, and inventing falsehood.

That dress affords good illustrations of PRACTICAL LIES.

That if false hair, false bloom, false eyebrows, and other artificial aids to the appearance, are so well contrived, that they seem palpably intended to pass for natural beauties, then do these aids of dress partake of the vicious nature of other lying.

That the medical man who desires his servant to call him out of church,

or from a party, when he is not wanted in order to give him the appearance of the great business which he has *not*; and the author who makes his publisher put second and third editions before a work of which, perhaps, even the *first* is not wholly sold, are also guilty of PRACTICAL LIES.

That the practical lies most fatal to others, are those acted by men who when in the gulph of bankruptcy launch out into increased splendour of living, in order to obtain further credit, by inducing an opinion that they are rich.

That another pernicious *practical* lie is acted by boys and girls at school who employ their schoolfellows to do exercises for them; or who themselves do them for others; that, by this means, children become acquainted with the practice of deceit as soon as

they enter a public school; and thus is counteracted the effect of those principles of spontaneous truth which they may have learnt at home.

That lying is mischievous and impolitic, because it destroys confidence, that best charm and only cement of society; and that it is almost impossible to believe our acquaintances, or expect to be believed ourselves, when we or they have once been detected in falsehood.

That speaking the truth does not imply a necessity to wound the feelings of any one. That offensive, or home truths, should never be *volunteered*, though one lays it down as a principle, that truth must be spoken *when called for*.

That often the temporary wound given by us, on principle, to the self-love of others, may be attended with

lasting benefit to them, and benevolence in reality be not wounded, but gratified; since the truly benevolent can always find a balm for the wounds which duty obliges them to inflict.

That, were the utterance of spontaneous truth to become a general principle of action in society, no one would dare to put such questions concerning their defects as I have enumerated; therefore the difficulty of always speaking truth would be almost annihilated.

That those who, in the presence of their acquaintance, make mortifying observations on their personal defects, or wound their self-love in any other way, are not actuated by the love of truth, but that their sincerity is the result of *coarseness of mind*, and of the *mean wish to inflict pain*.



That all human beings are, in their closets, convinced of the importance of truth to the interests of society, though few, comparatively, think the practice binding on them, when acting in the busy scene of the world.

That we must wonder still less at the little shame attached to white lying, when we see it sanctioned in the highest assemblies in the kingdom.

That, in the heat of political debate, in either house of parliament, offence is given and received, and the unavoidable consequence is thought to be apology, or duel; that the necessity of either is obviated only by LYING, the offender being at length induced to declare that by black he did not mean black, but white, and the offended says, “enough—I am satisfied.”

That the supposed necessity of thus making apologies, in the language of

falsehood, is much to be deplored ; and that the language of truth might be used with equal effect.

That, if the offender and offended were married men, the former might declare, that he would not, for any worldly consideration, run the risk of making his own wife a widow, and his own children fatherless, nor those of any other man ; and that he was also withheld by obedience to the divine command, “ Thou shalt not kill.”

That, though there might be many heroes present on such an occasion, whose heads were bowed down with the weight of their laurels, the man who could thus speak and act against the bloody custom of the world would be a greater hero, in the best sense of the word, as he would be made superior to the fear of man, by *fear of God*.

That some persons say, that they have lied so as to deceive, with an air of complacency, as if vain of their deceptive art, adding “but it was only a white lie, you know;” as if, therefore, it was no lie at all.

That it is common to hear even the pious and the moral assert that a deviation from truth, or a withholding of the truth, is *sometimes* absolutely necessary.

That persons who thus reason, if asked whether, while repeating the commandment, “thou shalt not steal,” they may, nevertheless, pilfer in some small degree, would, undoubtedly, answer in the negative; yet, that white lying is as much an infringement of the moral law as little pilfering is of the commandment not to steal.

That I have thought it right to give extracts from many powerful writers,

in corroboration of my own opinion on the subject of lying.

That, if asked why I have taken so much trouble to prove what no one ever doubted, I reply, that I have done so in order to force on the attention of my readers that not one of these writers mentions any allowed exception to the general rule of truth; and it seems to be their opinion that no *mental reservation* is to be permitted on *special occasions*.

That the principle of truth is an *immutable principle*, or it is of no use as a guard to morals.

That it is earnestly to be hoped and desired, that the day may come, when it shall be as dishonourable to commit the slightest breach of veracity as to pass counterfeit shillings.

That Dr. Hawkesworth is wrong in saying that the liar is universally aban-

doned and despised; for, although we dismiss the servant whose habit of lying offends us, we never refuse to associate with the liar of rank and opulence.

That, though, as he says, the imputation of a lie is an insult for which life only can atone, the man who would thus fatally resent it does not even reprove the *lie of convenience* in his wife or child, and is often guilty of it himself.

That the lying order given to a servant entails consequences of a mischievous nature; that it lowers the standard of truth in the person who receives it, lowers the persons who give it, and deprives the latter of their best claim to their servants' respect; namely, a conviction of their MORAL SUPERIORITY.

That the account given by Bos-

well, of Johnson's regard to truth, furnishes us with a better argument for it than is afforded by the best moral fictions.

That, if Johnson could always speak the truth, others can do the same; as it does not require his force of intellect to enable us to be sincere.

That, if it be asked what would be gained by always speaking the truth; I answer, that the individuals so speaking would acquire the involuntary confidence and reverence of their fellow-creatures.

That the consciousness of truth and ingenuousness gives a radiance to the countenance, and a charm to the manner, which no other quality of mind can equally bestow.

That the contrast to this picture must be familiar to the memory of every one.

That it is a delightful sensation to feel and inspire confidence.

That it is delightful to know that we have friends on whom we can always rely for honest counsel and ingenuous reproof.

That it is an ambition worthy of thinking beings to endeavour to qualify ourselves, and those whom we love, to be such friends as these.

That if each individual family would resolve to avoid every species of falsehood, whether authorized by custom or not, the example would soon spread.

That nothing is impossible to zeal and enterprise.

That there is a river which, if suffered to flow over the impurities of falsehood and dissimulation in the world, is powerful enough to wash them all away; since it flows from the FOUNTAIN OF EVER-LIVING WATERS.

That the powerful writers, from whom I have given extracts, have treated the subject of truth as *moralists only*; and have, therefore, kept out of sight the only *sure* motive to resist the temptation to lie; namely, OBEDIENCE TO THE DIVINE WILL.

That the moral man *may* utter spontaneous truth on all occasions; but, the religious man, if he acts consistently, *must* do so.

That, both the Old and New Testament abound in facts and texts to prove how odious the sin of lying is in the sight of the Almighty; as I have shown in several quotations from Scripture to that effect.

That, as no person has a right to resent being called a sloven who goes about in a stained garment, though that stain be a single one; so that person who indulges in any one spe-



cies of lie cannot declare, with justice, that he deserves not the name of liar.

That the all-powerful Being who has said “as is our day, our strength shall be,” still lives to hear the prayer of all who call on Him, and in the hour of temptation will “strengthen them out of Zion.”

That, in all other times of danger, the believer supplicates for help, but few persons think of praying to be preserved from *little lying*, though the Lord has not revealed to us what species of lying he *tolerates*, and what he *reproves*.

That, though I am sure it is not impossible to speak the truth always, when persons are powerfully influenced by religious motives, I admit the extreme difficulty of it, and have given the conduct of some distinguished re-

ligious characters as illustrations of the difficulty.

That other instances have been stated, in order to exemplify the power of religious motives on some minds to induce undaunted utterance of the truth, even when death was the sure consequence.

That temptations to little lying are far more common than temptations to *great* and *important* lies; that they are far more difficult to resist, because they come upon us daily and unawares, and because we know that we may utter white lies without fear of detection; and, if detected, without any risk of being disgraced by them in the eyes of others.

That, notwithstanding, they are equally, with great lies, contrary to the will of God, and that it is necessary to be “watchful unto prayer,”

when we are tempted to commit them.

I conclude this summary by again conjuring my readers to reflect that there is no moral difficulty, however great, which COURAGE, ZEAL, and PERSEVERANCE, will not enable them to overcome ; and, never, probably, was there a period, in the history of man, when those qualities seemed more successfully called into action than at the present moment.

Never was there a better opportunity of establishing general society on the principles of truth, than that now afforded by the enlightened plan of educating the INFANT POPULATION of these United Kingdoms.

There is one common ground on which the most sceptical philosopher and the most serious Christian meet, and cordially agree ; namely, on the doctrine of the *omnipotence*

*of motives.* They differ only on the *nature* of the motives to be applied to human actions; the one approving of moral motives alone, the other advocating the propriety of giving religious ones.

But, those motives only can be made to act upon the *infant* mind which it is able to understand ; and they are, chiefly, the hope of reward for obedience, and the dread of punishment for disobedience. But, these motives are all-sufficient ; therefore, even at the earliest period of life, a love of truth and an abhorrence of lying may be inculcated with the greatest success. Moreover, HABIT, that best of friends, or worst of foes, according to the direction given to its power, may form an impregnable barrier to defend the pupils thus trained, against the allurements of falsehood.

Children taught to tell the truth from the motive of fear and of hope, and from the force of habit, will be so well prepared to admit and profit by the highest motives to do so, as soon as they can be unfolded to their minds, that, when they are removed to other schools, as they advance in life, they will be found to abhor every description of lying and deceit; and thus the cause of *spontaneous truth* and general education will go forward, progressing and prospering together.

Nor can the mere moralist, or the man of the world, be blind to the benefit which would accrue to them, were society to be built on the foundation of truth and of sincerity. If our servants, a race of persons on whom much of our daily comfort depends, are trained up in habits of truth, domestic confidence and security will

be the happy result; and we shall no longer hear the common complaint of their lies and dishonesty; and, the parents who feel the value of truth in their domesticks, will, doubtless, take care to teach their children those habits which have had power to raise even their inferiors in the scale of utility and of moral excellence. Where are the worldlings who, in such a state of society, would venture to persevere in what they now deem *necessary white lying*, when the lady may be shamed into truth by the refusal of her *waiting-maid* to utter the lie required; and the gentleman may learn to feel the meanness of falsehood, alias, of the LIE OF CONVENIENCE, by the respectful, but firm, resistance to utter it of his *valet-de-chambre*? But, if the minds of the poor and the laborious, who must always form the most

extensive part of the community, are formed in infancy to the practice of moral virtue, the happiness, safety, and improvement, of the higher classes will, I doubt not, be thereby secured. As the lofty heads of the pyramids of Egypt were rendered able to resist the power of the storm and the whirlwind, through successive ages, by the extent of their bases, and by the soundness and strength of the materials of which they were constructed, so, the continued security, and the very existence, perhaps, of the higher orders in society, may depend on the extended moral teaching and sound principles of the lowest orders; for treachery and conspiracy, with their results, rebellion and assassination, are not likely to be the crimes of those who have been taught to practise *truth* and *openness* in all their dealings, on the ground

of MORAL ORDER, and of obedience to the WILL OF GOD.

But, it is the bounden duty of the rich and of the great to maintain their superiority of mind and morals, as well as that of wealth and situation. I beseech them to remember that it will always be their place to *give* and not to *take* example; and they must be careful, in a race of morality, to be neither outstripped, nor overtaken by their inferiors. They must also believe, in order to render their efforts successful, that, although morality without religion is, comparatively, weak, yet, when these are combined, they are strong enough to overcome all obstacles.

Lying is a sin which tempts us on every side, but is most to be dreaded when it allures us in the shape of white lies; for against these, as I have before



observed, we are not on our guard; and, instead of looking on them as enemies, we consider them as friends.

BLACK LIES, if I may so call them, are beasts and birds of prey, which we rarely see; and, which when seen, we know that we must instantly avoid: but white lies approach us in the pleasing shape of *necessary courtesies and innocent self-defence*.

Finally, I would urge them to remember that, if they believe in the records of holy writ, they can thence derive sufficient motives to enable them to tell spontaneous truth, in defiance of the sneers of the world, and of “evil and good report.”

That faith in a life to come, connected with a close dependence on divine grace, will give them power in this, as well as in other respects, to emancipate themselves from their own

bondage of corruption, as well as to promote the purification of others. For, Christians possess what Archimedes wanted; they have *another* sphere on which to fix their hold; and, by that means, can be enabled to move, to influence, and to benefit this present world of transitory enjoyments; a world which is in reality safe and precious to those alone who “use it, without abusing it, and who are ever looking beyond it “to a building of God, a home not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

THE END.

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